

THE MISSION OF MR. EUSTACE GREYNE

By Robert Hichens

MRS. EUSTACE GREYNE (pronounced Green) wrinkled her forehead—that noble, that startling forehead which had been written about in the newspapers of two hemispheres—laid down her American Squeezer pen, and sighed. It was an autumn day, nipping and melancholy, full of the rustle of dying leaves and the faint sound of muffin bells, and Belgrave Square looked sad even to the great female novelist who had written her way into a mansion there. Fog hung about with the policeman on the pavement. The passing motor-cars were like shadows. Their stertorous pantings sounded to Mrs. Greyne's ears like the asthma of dying monsters. She sighed again, and murmured in a deep contralto voice, "It must be so." Then she got up, crossed the heavy Persian carpet which had been bought with the proceeds of a short story in her earlier days, and placed her forefinger upon an electric bell.

Like lightning a powdered giant came.

"Has Mr. Greyne gone out?"

"No, ma'am."

"Where is he?"

"In his study, ma'am, pasting the last of the cuttings into the new album."

Mrs. Greyne smiled. It was a pretty picture the unconscious six-footer had conjured up.

"I am sorry to disturb Mr. Greyne," she answered, with that gracious, and even curling suavity which won all

hearts; "but I wish to see him. Will you ask him to come to me for a moment?"

The giant flew, silk-stockinged, to obey the mandate, while Mrs. Greyne sat down on a carved oaken chair of ecclesiastical aspect, to await her husband.

She was a famous woman, a personage, this simply attired lady. With an American Squeezer pen she had won fame, fortune and a mansion in Belgrave Square, and all without the sacrifice of principle. Respectability incarnate, she had so dealt with the sorrows and evils of the world that she had rendered them utterly acceptable to Mrs. Grundy, Mr. Grundy and all the Misses Grundy. People said she dived into the depths of human nature, and brought up nothing that need scandalize a curate's grandmother or the whole-aunt of an archdeacon; and this was so true that she had made a really prodigious amount of money. Her large, her solid, her unrelenting books lay upon every table. Even the smart set kept them, uncut—like pretty sinners who have never been "found out"—to give an air of haphazard intellectuality to frisky boudoirs. All the clergy, however unable to get their tithes, bought them. All bishops alluded to them in "pulpit utterances." Fabulous prices were paid for them by magazine editors. They ran as serials through all the tale of months. The suburbs battered on them. The provinces adored

them. County people talked of no other literature. In fact, Mrs. Eustace Greyne was a really fabulous success.

Why, then, should she heave these heavy sighs in Belgrave Square? Why should she lift an intellectual hand as though to tousle the glossy chestnut bandeaux which swept back from her forcible forehead, and screw her long and reassuring features—powerful as those of some Roman emperor, yet orthodox as ever could have been Miss Hannah More's—into these wrinkles of perplexity and distress?

The door opened, and Mr. Eustace Greyne appeared, "What is it, Eugenia?" upon his lips.

Mr. Greyne was a number of years younger than his celebrated wife, and looked even younger than his years. He was a very smart man, with smooth, jet-black hair, which he wore parted in the middle; pleasant, dark eyes that could twinkle gently; a clear, pale complexion, and a nice, tall figure. One felt, in glancing at him, that he had been an Eton boy, and had at least thought of going into the militia at some period of his life. His history can be briefly told.

Scarcely had he emerged into the world before he met and was married to Mrs. Eustace Greyne, then Miss Eugenia Hannibal-Barker. He had had no time to sow a single oat, wild or otherwise; no time to adore a barmaid, or wish to have his name linked with that of an actress; no time to do anything wrong or even to know, with the complete accuracy desired by all persevering young men, what was really wrong. Miss Eugenia Hannibal-Barker sailed upon his horizon, and he struck his flag to matrimony. Ever since then he had been her husband, and had never, even for one second, emerged beyond the boundaries of the most intellectual respectability. He was the most innocent of men, although he knew all the important editors in London. Swaddled in money by his successful wife, he considered her a goddess. She poured the thousands into Coutts's Bank, and with the arrival of each fresh thousand he was

more firmly convinced that she was a goddess. To say he looked up to her would be too mild. As the cockney tourist in Chamounix peers at the summit of Mont Blanc, he peered at Mrs. Greyne. And when, finally, she bought the lease of the mansion in Belgrave Square, he knew her Delphic.

So, now, he appeared in the oracle's retreat, respectfully, "What is it, Eugenia?" upon his admiring lips.

"Sit down, my husband," she murmured.

Mr. Greyne subsided by the fire, placing his pointed patent-leather toes upon the burnished fender. Without, the fog grew deeper and the chorus of the muffin bells more plaintive. The firelight, flickering over Mrs. Greyne's majestic features, made them look Rembrandtesque. Her large, ox-like eyes were fixed and thoughtful. After a pause, she said:

"Eustace, I shall have to send you upon a mission."

"A mission, Eugenia!" said Mr. Greyne, in great surprise.

"A mission of the utmost importance, the utmost delicacy."

"Has it anything to do with Romeike & Curtice?"

"No."

"Will it take me far?"

"That is my trouble. It will take you very far."

"Out of London?"

"Oh, yes."

"Out of—not out of England?"

"Yes. It will take you to Algeria."

"Good gracious!" cried Mr. Greyne.

Mrs. Greyne sighed.

"Good gracious!" Mr. Greyne repeated, after a short interval. "Am I to go alone?"

"Of course you must take Darrell." Darrell was Mr. Greyne's valet.

"And what am I to do at Algiers?"

"You must obtain for me there the whole of the material for book six of 'Catherine's Repentance.'" "Catherine's Repentance" was the gigantic novel upon which Mrs. Greyne was at that moment engaged.

"I will not disguise from you, Eustace," continued Mrs. Greyne,

looking increasingly Rembrandtesque, "that, in my present work, I am taking a somewhat new departure."

"Well, but we are very comfortable here," said Mr. Greyne.

With each new book, they had changed their abode. "Harriet" took them from Phillimore Gardens to Queensgate Terrace; "Jane's Desire" moved them on to a corner house in Sloane street; with "Isobel's Fortune" they passed to Curzon street; "Susan's Vanity" landed them in Coburg Place; and, finally, "Margaret's Involution" had planted them in Belgrave Square. Now, with each of these works of genius Mrs. Greyne had taken what she called "a new departure." Mr. Greyne's remark is, therefore, explicable.

"True. Still, there is always Park Lane."

She mused for a moment. Then, leaning more heavily upon the carved lions of her chair, she continued:

"Hitherto, although I have sometimes dealt with human frailty, I have treated it gently. I have never betrayed a Zola-spirit."

"Zola! My darling!" cried Mr. Eustace Greyne. "You are surely not going to betray anything of that sort now!"

"If she does, we shall soon have to move off to West Kensington," was his secret thought.

"No. But in book six of 'Catherine' I have to deal with sin, with tumult, with African frailty. It is inevitable."

She sighed once more. The burden of the new book was very heavy upon her.

"African frailty!" murmured the astounded Eustace Greyne.

"Now, neither you nor I, my husband, know anything about this."

"Certainly not, my darling. How should we? We have never explored beyond Lucerne."

"We must, therefore, get to know about it—at least you must. For I cannot leave London. The continuity of the brain's traveling must not be imperiled by any violent bodily

activity. In the present stage of my book a sea journey might be disastrous."

"Certainly, you should keep quiet, my love. But then——"

"You must go for me to Algiers. There you must get me what I want. I fear you will have to poke about in the native quarters a good deal for it, so you had better buy two revolvers, one for yourself and one for Darrell."

Mr. Greyne gasped. The calmness of his wife amazed him. He was not intellectual enough to comprehend fully the deep imaginings of a mighty brain, the obsession work is in the worker.

"African frailty is what I want," pursued Mrs. Greyne. "One hundred closely printed pages of African frailty. You will collect for me the raw material, and I shall so manipulate it that it will fall discreetly, even elevatingly, into the artistic whole. Do you understand me, Eustace?"

"I am to travel to Algiers and see all the wickedness to be seen there, take notes of it, and bring them back to you."

"Precisely."

"And how long am I to stay?"

"Until you have made yourself acquainted with the depths."

"A fortnight?"

"I should think that would be enough. Take Brush's remedy for seasickness and plenty of antipyrin, your fur coat for the crossing, and a white helmet and umbrella for the arrival. You have lead pencils?"

"Plenty."

"A couple of Merrin's exercise books should be enough to contain your notes."

"When am I to go?"

"The sooner the better. I am at a standstill for want of the material. You might catch the express to Paris tomorrow; no, say the day after tomorrow." She looked at him tenderly. "The parting will be bitter."

"Very bitter," Mr. Eustace Greyne replied.

He felt really upset. Mrs. Greyne laid the hand which had brought them

from Phillimore Gardens to Belgrave Square gently upon his.

"Think of the result," she said. "The greatest book I have done yet. A book that will last. A book that will——"

"Take us to Park Lane," he murmured.

The Rembrandtesque head nodded. The noble features, as of a strictly respectable Roman emperor, relaxed.

"A book that will take us to Park Lane."

At this moment the door opened, and the footman inquired:

"Could Mademoiselle Verbèna see you for a minute, ma'am?"

Mademoiselle Verbèna was the French governess of the two little Greyne's. The great novelist had consented to become a mother.

"Certainly."

In another moment, Mademoiselle Verbèna was added to the group beside the fire.

II

WE have said that Mademoiselle Verbèna was the French governess of little Adolphus and Olivia Greyne, and so she was to this extent—that she taught them French, and that Mr. and Mrs. Greyne supposed her to be a Parisian. But life has its little ironies. Mademoiselle Verbèna in the house of this great and respectable novelist was one of them; for she was a Levantine, born at Port Saïd of a Suez Canal father and a Suez Canal mother. Now, nobody can desire to say anything against Port Saïd. At the same time, few mothers would inevitably pick it out as the ideal spot from which a beneficent influence for childhood's happy hour would be certain to emanate. Nor, it must be allowed, is a Suez Canal ancestry specially necessary to a trainer of young souls. It may not be a drawback, but it can hardly be described as an advantage. This, Mademoiselle Verbèna was intelligent enough to know. She, therefore, concealed the fact that her father had been a dredger of Monsieur de Lesseps's triumph,

her mother a bar-lady of the historic coal wharf where the ships are fed, and preferred to suppose—and to permit others to suppose—that she had first seen the light in the Rue St. Honoré, her parents being a count and countess of some old regime.

This supposition, retained from her earliest years, had affected her appearance and her manner. She was a very neat, very trim, even a very attractive little person, with dark-brown, roguish eyes, blue-black hair, a fairylike figure and the prettiest hands and feet imaginable. She had first attracted Mrs. Greyne's attention by her devotion to St. Paul's Cathedral, and this devotion she still kept up. Whenever she had an hour or two free she always—so she herself said—spent it in "*ce charmant St. Paul*."

As she entered the oracle's retreat, she cast down her eyes and trembled visibly.

"What is it, Miss Verbèna?" inquired Mrs. Greyne, with a kindly English accent, calculated to set any poor French creature quite at ease.

Mademoiselle Verbèna trembled more.

"I have received bad news, madame."

"I grieve to hear it. Of what nature?"

"Mama has *une bronchite très grave*."

"A what, Miss Verbèna?"

"Pardon, madame. A very grave bronchitis. She cries for me."

"Indeed!"

"The doctors say she will die."

"This is very sad."

The Levantine wept. Even Suez Canal folk are not proof against all human sympathy. Mr. Greyne blew his nose beside the fire, and Mrs. Greyne said again:

"I repeat that this is very sad."

"Madame, if I do not go to mama tomorrow I shall not see her more."

Mrs. Greyne looked very grave.

"Oh!" she remarked. She thought profoundly for a moment, and then added, "Indeed!"

"It is true, madame."

Suddenly, Mademoiselle Verbèna

flung herself down on the Persian carpet at Mrs. Greyne's large but well-proportioned feet, and, bathing them with her tears, cried in a heartrending manner:

"Madame will let me go! madame will permit me to fly to poor mama—to close her dying eyes—to kiss once again——"

Mr. Greyne was visibly affected, and even Mrs. Greyne seemed somewhat put about, for she moved her feet rather hastily out of reach of the dependent's emotion, and made her scramble up.

"Where is your poor mother?"

"In Paris, madame. In the Rue St. Honoré where I was born. Oh, if she should die there! If she should——"

Mrs. Greyne raised her hand, commanding silence.

"You wish to go there?"

"If madame permits."

"When?"

"Tomorrow, madame."

"Tomorrow? This is decidedly abrupt."

"*Mais la bronchite, madame*, she is abrupt, and death, she may be abrupt."

"True. One moment!"

There was an instant's silence for Mrs. Greyne to let loose her brain in. She did so, then said:

"You have my permission. Go tomorrow, but return as soon as possible. I do not wish Adolphus to lose his still uncertain grasp upon the irregular verbs."

In a flood of grateful tears, Mademoiselle Verbena retired to make her preparations. On the morrow, she was gone.

The morrow was a day of much perplexity, much bustle and excitement for Mr. Greyne and the valet, Darrell. They were preparing for Algiers. In the morning, at an early hour, Mr. Greyne set forth in the barouche with Mrs. Greyne, to purchase African necessities; a small but well-supplied medicine chest, a pith helmet, a white-and-green umbrella, a Baedeker, a couple of Smith & Wesson Springfield revolvers with a due amount of cartridges, a dozen of Merrin's exercise

books—on mature reflection Mrs. Greyne thought that two would hardly contain a sufficient amount of African frailty for her present purpose—a packet of lead pencils, some bottles of a remedy for seasickness, a silver flask for cognac, and various other trifles such as travelers in distant continents require.

Meanwhile, Darrell was learning French for the journey, and packing his own and his master's trunks. The worthy fellow, a man of twenty-five summers, had never been across the Channel—the Greyne's being by no means prone to foreign travel—and it may therefore be imagined that he was in a state of considerable expectation as he laid the trousers, coats and waistcoats in their respective places, selected such boots as seemed likely to wear well in a tropical climate, and dropped those shirts, which are so contrived as to admit plenty of ventilation to the heated body, into the case reserved for them.

When Mr. Greyne returned from his shopping excursion, the barouche, loaded almost to the girthwale—if one may be permitted a nautical expression in this connection—had to be disburthened, and its contents conveyed upstairs to Mr. Greyne's bedroom, into which Mrs. Greyne herself presently entered to give directions for their disposing. Nor was it till the hour of sunset that everything was in due order, the straps set fast, the keys duly turned in the locks, the labels—"Mr. Eustace Greyne: Passenger to Algiers: via Marseilles"—carefully written out in a full, round hand. Rook's tickets had been bought, so now everything was ready, and the last evening in England might be spent by Mr. Greyne in the drawing-room and by Darrell in the servants' hall quietly, socially, perhaps pathetically.

The pathos of the situation, it must be confessed, appealed more to the master than to the servant. Darrell was very gay and inclined to be boastful, full of information as to how he would comport himself with "them there Frenchies," and how he would

make "them pore, godless Arabs sit up." But Mr. Greyne's attitude of mind was very different. As the night drew on, and Mrs. Greyne and he sat by the wood fire in the magnificent drawing-room, to which they always adjourned after dinner, a keen sense of the sorrow of departure swept over them both.

"How lonely you will feel without me, Eugenia," said Mr. Greyne. "I have been thinking of that all day."

"And you, Eustace, how desolate will be your tale of days! My mind runs much on that. You will miss me at every hour."

"You are so accustomed to have me within call, to depend upon me for encouragement in your life-work. I scarcely know how you will get on when I am far across the sea."

"And you, for whom I have labored, for whom I have planned and calculated, what will be your sensations when you realize that a gulf—the Gulf of Lyons—is fixed irrevocably between us?"

So their thoughts ran. Each one was full of tender pity for the other. Toward bedtime, however, conscious that the time for colloquy was running short, they fell into more practical discourse.

"I wonder," said Mr. Greyne, "whether I shall find any difficulty in gaining the information you require, my darling. I suppose these places"—he spoke vaguely, for his thoughts were vague—"are somewhat awkward to come at. Naturally they would avoid the eye of day."

Mrs. Greyne looked profound.

"Yes. Evil ever seeks the darkness. You will have to do the same."

"You think my investigations must take place at night?"

"I should certainly suppose so."

"And where shall I find a cicerone?"

"Apply to Rook."

"In what terms? You see, dearest, this is rather a special matter, isn't it?"

"Very special. But on no account hint that you are in Algiers for 'Catherine's' sake. It would get into the papers. It would be cabled to

America. The whole reading world would be agog, and the future interest of the book discounted."

Mr. Greyne looked at his wife with reverence. In such moments he realized, almost too poignantly, her great position.

"I will be careful," he said. "What would you recommend me to say?"

"Well"—Mrs. Greyne knit her superb forehead—"I should suggest that you present yourself as an ordinary traveler, but with a specially inquiring bent of mind, and a slight tendency toward the—the—er—hidden things of life."

"I suppose you wish me to visit the public-houses?"

"I wish you to see everything that has part or lot in African frailty. Go everywhere, see everything. Bring your notes to me, and I will select such fragments of the broken commandments as suit my purpose, which is, as always, the edifying of the human race. Only this time I mean to purge it as by fire."

"That corner house in Park Lane, next to the Duke of Ebury's, would suit us very well," said Mr. Greyne, reflectively.

"We could sell our lease here at an advance," his wife rejoined. "You will not waste your journey, Eustace?"

"My love," returned Mr. Greyne, with decision, "I will apply to Rook on arrival, and, if I find his man unsatisfactory, if I have any reason to suspect that I am not being shown everything—more especially in the Kasbah region, which, from the guide-books we bought today, is, I take it, the most abandoned portion of the city—I will seek another cicerone."

"Do so. And now to bed. You must sleep well tonight in preparation for the journey."

It was their invariable habit before retiring to drink each a tumbler of barley water which was set out by the butler in Mrs. Greyne's study. After this nightcap, Mrs. Greyne wrote up her anticipatory diary, while Mr. Greyne smoked a mild cigar, and then they went to bed. Tonight, as usual,

they repaired to the sanctum, and drank their barley water. Having done so, Mr. Greyne drew forth his cigar-case, while Mrs. Greyne went to her writing-table, and prepared to unlock the drawer in which her diary reposed, safe from all prying eyes.

The match was struck, the key was inserted in the lock and turned. As the cigar end glowed, the drawer was opened. Mr. Greyne heard a contralto cry. He turned from the arm-chair in which he was just about to seat himself.

"My love, is anything the matter?"

His wife was bending forward with both hands in the drawer, telling over its contents.

"My diary is not here!"

"Your diary!"

"It is gone."

"But"—he came over to her—"this is very serious. I presume, like all diaries, it is full of—" instinctively he had been about to say "damning"; he remembered his dear one's irreproachable character, and substituted "precious secrets."

"It is full of matter which must never be given to the world—my secret thoughts, my aspirations. The whole history of my soul is there."

"Heavens! It must be found."

They searched the writing-table. They searched the room. No diary.

"Could you have taken it to my room and left it there?" asked Mr. Greyne.

They hastened thither and looked—in vain. By this time, the servants were gone to bed, and the two searchers were quite alone on the ground floor of their magnificent mansion. Mrs. Greyne began to look seriously perturbed. Her Roman features worked.

"This is appalling," she exclaimed. "Some thief, knowing it priceless, must have stolen the diary. It will be published in America. It will bring in thousands—but to others, not to us."

She began to wring her hands. It was near midnight.

"Think, my love, think!" cried Mr.

Greyne. "Where could you have taken it? You had it last night?"

"Certainly. I remember writing in it that you would be sailing to Algiers on the *Général Bertrand* on Thursday of this week, and that on the night I should be feeling widowed here. The previous night I wrote that yesterday I should have to tell you of your mission. You know I always put down beforehand what I shall do, what I shall even think on each succeeding day. It is a practice that regulates the mind and conduct, that helps to uniformity."

"How true! Who can have taken it? Do you ever leave it about?"

"Never. Am I a madwoman?"

"My darling, compose yourself! We must search the house."

They proceeded to do so, and, on coming into the school-room, Mrs. Greyne, who was in front, uttered a sudden cry.

Upon the table of Mademoiselle Verbena lay the diary, open at the following entry:

On Thursday next poor Eustace will be on board the *Général Bertrand* sailing for Algiers. I shall be here thinking of myself, and of him in relation to myself. God help us both. Duty is sometimes stern. *Mem.* The corner house in Park Lane, next the Duke of Ebury's, has sixty years still to run; the lease, that is. Thursday—poor Eustace!

"What does this portend?" cried Mrs. Greyne.

"My darling, it passes my wit to imagine," replied her husband.

III

THE parting of Mr. and Mrs. Greyne on the following morning was very affecting. It took place at Victoria Station, in the midst of a small crowd of admiring strangers, who had recognized the commanding presence of the great novelist, and had gathered round to observe her manifestations.

Mrs. Greyne was considerably shaken by the event of the previous night. Although, on the discovery of the diary, the house had been roused and all the

servants closely questioned, no light had been thrown upon its migration from the locked drawer to the school-room table. Adolphus and Olivia, jerked from sleep by the hasty hands of a maid, could only weep and wail. The powdered footmen, one and all, declared they had never heard of a diary. The butler gave warning on the spot, keeping on his nightcap to give greater effect to his pronouncement. It was all most unsatisfactory, and for one wild moment Mrs. Greyne seriously thought of retaining her husband by her as a protection against the mysterious thief who had been at work in their midst. Could it be Mademoiselle Verbèna? The dread surmise occurred, but Mr. Greyne rejected it.

"Her father was a count," he said. "Besides, my darling, I don't believe she can read English; certainly not unless it is printed."

So there the matter rested, and the moment of parting came.

There was a murmur of respectful sympathy as Mrs. Greyne clasped her husband tenderly in her arms, and pressed his head against her prune-colored bonnet-strings. The whistle sounded. The train moved on. Leaning from a reserved first-class compartment, Mr. Greyne waved a silk pocket-handkerchief so long as his wife's Roman profile stood out clear against the fog and smoke of London. But at last it faded, grew remote, took on the appearance of a feebly executed crayon drawing, vanished. He sank back upon the cushions—alone. Darrell was traveling second with the dressing-case.

It was a strange sensation, to be alone, and *en route* to Algiers. Mr. Greyne scarcely knew what to make of it. A school-boy suddenly despatched to Timbuctoo could hardly have felt more terribly emancipated than he did. He was so absolutely unaccustomed to freedom, he had been for so long without the faintest desire for it, that to have it thrust upon him so suddenly was almost alarming. He felt lonely, anxious, horribly unmar-

ried. To divert his thoughts, he drew forth a Merrin's exercise book and a pencil, and wrote on the first page, in large letters, "*African Frailty. Notes For.*" Then he sat gazing at the title of his first literary work, and wondering what on earth he was going to see in Algiers.

Vague visions of himself in the bars of African public-houses, in mosques, in the two-pair-backs of dervishes, in bazaars—which he pictured to himself like those opened by royalties at the Queen's Hall—in Moorish interiors surrounded by voluptuous ladies with large, oval eyes, black tresses and Turkish trousers of spangled muslin, flitted before his mental gaze. When the train ran upon Dover Pier, and the white horses of the turbulent Channel foamed at his feet, he started as one roused from a Rip Van Winkle sleep. Severe illness occupied his whole attention for a time, and then recovery.

In Paris, he dined at the buffet like one in a dream, and, at the appointed hour, came forth to take the *rapide* for Marseilles. He looked for Darrell and the dressing-case. They were not to be seen. There stood the train. Passengers were mounting into it. Old ladies with agitated faces were buying pillows and nibbling biscuits. Elderly gentlemen with yellow countenances and red ribands in their coats were purchasing the *Figaro* and the *Gil Blas*. Children with bare legs were being hauled into compartments. Rook's agent was explaining to a muddled tourist in a tam-o'-shanter the exact difference between the words "*Oui*" and "*Non*." The bustle of departure was in the air, but Darrell was not to be seen. Mr. Greyne had left him upon the platform with minute directions as to the point from which the train would start, and the hour of its going. Yet he had vanished. The most frantic search, the most frenzied inquiries of officials and total strangers failed to elicit his whereabouts, and, finally, Mr. Greyne was flung forcibly upward into the *wagon-lit*, and caught by the *contrôleur* when

the train was actually moving out of the station.

A moment later, he fell exhausted upon the pink-plush seat of his compartment, realizing his terrible position. He was now utterly alone; without servant, hair-brushes, tooth-brushes, razors, sponges, pajamas, shoes. It was a solitude that might be felt. He thought of the sea journey with no kindly hand to minister to him, the arrival in Africa with no humble companion at his side, to wonder with him at the black inhabitants and help him through the customs—to say nothing of the manners. He thought of the dread homes of iniquity into which he must penetrate by night in search of the material for the voracious "Catherine." He had meant to take Darrell with him to them all—Darrell, whose joyful delight in the prospect of exploring the Eastern fastnesses of crime had been so boyish, so truly English in its frank, its even boisterous sincerity.

And now he was utterly alone, almost like Robinson Crusoe.

The *contrôleur* came in to make the bed. Mr. Greyne told him the dreadful story.

"No doubt he has been lured away, monsieur. The dressing-case was of value?"

"Crocodile, gold fittings."

"Probably monsieur will never see him again. As likely as not he will sleep in the Seine tonight, and at the morgue tomorrow."

Mr. Greyne shuddered. This was an ill omen for his expedition. He drank a stiff whisky-and-soda instead of the usual barley water, and went to bed to dream of bloody murders in which he was the victim.

When the train ran into Marseilles next morning, he was an unshaven, miserable man.

"Have I time to buy a tooth-brush," he inquired, anxiously, at the station, "before the boat sails for Algiers?"

The *chef de gare* thought so. Monsieur had four hours, if that was sufficient. Mr. Greyne hastened forth, had a Turkish bath, purchased a new dress-

ing-case, ate a hasty *déjeuner*, and took a cab to the wharf. It was a long drive over the stony streets. He glanced from side to side, watching the bustling traffic, the hurry of the nations going to and from the ships. His eyes rested upon two Arabs who were striding along in his direction. Doubtless they were also bound for Algiers. He thought they looked most wicked, and hastily took a note of them for "African Frailty." Beside his sense of loss and loneliness marched the sense of duty. The great woman at home in Belgrave Square, founder of his fortunes, mother of his children, she depended upon him. Even in his own hour of need he would not fail her. He took a lead pencil and wrote down:

Saw two Arab ruffians. Bare legs. Look capable of anything. Should not be surprised to hear that they had——

There he paused. That they had what? Done things. Of course, but what things? That was the question. He exerted his imagination, but failed to arrive at any conclusion as to their probable crimes. His knowledge of wickedness was really absurdly limited. For the first time, he felt slightly ashamed of it, and began to wish he had gone into the militia. He comforted himself with the thought that in a fortnight he would probably be fit for the regular army. This thought cheered him slightly, and it was with a slight smile upon his face that he welcomed the first glimpse of the *Général Bertrand*, which was lying against the quay ready to cast off at the stroke of noon. Most of the passengers were aboard, but, as Mr. Greyne stepped out of his cab, and prepared to pay the Maltese driver, a trim little lady, plainly dressed in black, and carrying a tiny and rather coquettish handbag, was tripping lightly across the gangway. Mr. Greyne glanced at her as he turned to follow, glanced and then started. That back was surely familiar to him. Where could he have seen it before? He searched his memory as the little lady vanished. It was a smart, even a *chic* back, a back that knew how to take care of itself, a back that need not

go through the world alone, a back, in fine, that was most distinctly attractive, if not absolutely alluring. Where had he seen it before, or had he ever seen it at all? He thought of his wife's back, flat, powerful, uncompromising. This was very different, more—how should he put it to himself?—more Algerian, perhaps. He could vaguely conceive it a back such as one might meet with while engaged in adding to one's stock of knowledge of—well—African frailty.

At this moment the steward appeared to show him to his cabin, and his further reflections were mainly connected with the Gulf of Lyons.

Twilight was beginning to fall when, so far as he was capable of thinking, he thought he would like a breath of air. For some moments he lay quite still, dwelling on this idea which had so mysteriously come to him. Then he got up and thought again, seated upon the cabin floor. He knew there was a deck. He remembered having seen one when he came aboard. He put on his fur coat, still sitting on the cabin floor. The process took some time—he fancied about a couple of years. At last, however, it was completed, and he rose to his feet with the assistance of the washstand and the berth.

The ship seemed very busy, full of almost American activity. He thought a greater calm would have been more decent, and waited in the hope that the floor would presently cease to forget itself. As it showed no symptoms of complying with his desire, he endeavored to spurn it and, in the fulness of time, gained the companion.

It was very strange, as he remembered afterward, that only when he had gained the companion did the sense of his utter loneliness rush upon him with overwhelming force: one of the ironies of life, he supposed. Eventually, he shook the companion off with a good deal of difficulty, and found himself installed upon planks under a gray sky, and holding fast to a railing, which was all that interposed between him and eternity.

At first, he was only conscious of grayness and the noise of winds

and waters, but presently a black daub seemed to hover for a second somewhere on the verge of his world, to hover and disappear. He wondered what it was. A smut, perhaps. He rubbed his face. The daub returned. It was very large for a smut. He strove to locate it, and found that it must be somewhere on his left cheek. With a great effort, he took out his pocket-handkerchief. Suddenly the daub assumed monstrous proportions. He turned his head, and perceived the lady in black whom he had seen tripping over the gangway on his arrival.

She was a few steps from him, leaning upon the rail in an attitude of the deepest dejection, with her face averted; yet it struck him that her right shoulder was oddly familiar, as her back had surely been. The turn of her head, too—he coughed despairingly. The lady took no notice. He coughed again. Interest was quickening in him. He was determined to see the lady's face.

This time she looked around, showing a pale countenance bedewed with tears, and totally devoid of any expression which he could connect with a consciousness of his presence. For a moment, she stared vacantly at him, while he, with almost equal vacancy, regarded her. Then a thrill of surprise shook him. A sudden light of knowledge leaped up in him, and he exclaimed:

"Mademoiselle Verbèna!"

"Monsieur?" murmured the lady, with an accent of surprise.

"Mademoiselle Verbèna! Surely it is—it must be!"

He had staggered sideways, nearing her.

"Mademoiselle Verbèna, do you not know me? It is I, Eustace Greyne, the father of your pupils, the husband of Mrs. Eustace Greyne!"

An expression of stark amazement came into the lady's face at these words. She leaned forward till her eyes were close to Mr. Greyne's, then gave a little cry.

"*Mon Dieu!* It is true! You are so altered that I could not recognize.

And then—what are you doing here, on the wide sea, far from madame?"

"I was just about to ask you the very same question!" cried Mr. Greyne.

IV

"ALAS, monsieur!" said Mademoiselle Verbèna, in her silvery voice, "I go to see my poor mother."

"But I understood that she was dying in Paris."

"Even so. But, when I reached the Rue St. Honoré, I found that they had removed her to Algiers. It was the only chance, the doctor said—a warm climate, the sun of Africa. There was no time to let me know. They took her away at once. And now I follow—perhaps to find her dead."

Large tears rolled down her cheeks. Mr. Greyne was deeply affected.

"Let us hope for the best," he exclaimed, seized by a happy inspiration. The Levantine strove to smile.

"But you, monsieur, why are you here? Ah! perhaps madame is with you! Let me go to her! Let me kiss her dear hands once more——"

Mr. Greyne mournfully checked her fond excitement.

"I am quite alone," he said.

A tragic expression came into the Levantine's face.

"But, then——?" she began.

It was impossible for him to tell her about "Catherine." He was, therefore, constrained to subterfuge.

"I—I was suddenly overtaken by—by influenza," he said, in some confusion. "The doctor recommended change of air, of scene. He suggested Algiers——"

"*Mon Dieu!* It is like poor mama!"

"Precisely. Our constitutions are—are doubtless similar. I shall take this opportunity also of improving my knowledge of African manners and—and customs."

A strange smile seemed to dawn for a second on Mademoiselle Verbèna's face, but it died instantaneously in a grimace of pain.

"My teeth make me bad," she said. "Ah, monsieur, I must go below, to pray for poor mama——" she paused, then softly added, "and for monsieur."

She made a movement as if to depart, but Mr. Greyne begged her to remain. In his loneliness the sight even of a Levantine whom he knew solaced his yearning heart. He felt quite friendly toward this poor, unhappy girl, for whom, perhaps, such a shock was preparing upon the distant shore.

"Better stay!" he said. "The air will do you good."

"Ah, if I die, what matter? Unless mama lives there is no one in the world who cares for me, for whom I care."

"There—there is—Mrs. Greyne," said her husband. "And then St. Paul's—remember St. Paul's."

"Ah, *ce charmant* St. Paul! Shall I ever see him more?"

She looked at Mr. Greyne, and suddenly—he knew not why—Mr. Greyne remembered the incident of the diary, and blushed.

"Monsieur has fever!"

Mr. Greyne shook his head. The Levantine eyed him, curiously.

"Monsieur wishes to say something to me, and does not like to speak."

Mr. Greyne made an effort. Now that he was with this gentle lady, with her white face, her weeping eyes, her plain black dress, the mere suspicion that she could have opened a locked drawer with a secret key, and filched therefrom a private record, seemed to him unpardonable. Yet, for a brief instant, it had occurred to him, and Mrs. Greyne had seriously held it. He looked at Mademoiselle Verbèna, and a sudden impulse to tell her the truth overcame him.

"Yes," he said.

"Tell me, monsieur."

In broken words—the ship was still very busy—Mr. Greyne related the incident of the loss and finding of the diary. As he spoke, a slight change stole over the Levantine's face. It certainly became less pale.

"But you have fever now!" cried Mr. Greyné, anxiously.

"I! No, I flush with horror, not with fever! The diary, the sacred diary of madame, exposed to view, read by the children, perhaps, the servants! That footman, Thomas, with the nose of curiosity! Ah! I behold that nose penetrating into the holy secrets of the existence of madame! I behold it—ah!"

She burst into a fit of hysterics, the laughing species which is so much more terrible than the other sort. Mr. Greyné was greatly concerned. He lurched to her, and implored her to be calm, but she only laughed the more while tears streamed down her cheeks. The vision of Thomas gloating over Mrs. Greyné's diary seemed utterly to unnerve her, and Mr. Greyné was able to measure, by this ebullition of horror, the depth of the respect and affection entertained by her for his beloved wife. When, at length, she grew calmer, he escorted her toward her cabin, offering her his arm, on which she leaned heavily. As soon as they were in the narrow and heaving passage she turned to him and said:

"Who can have taken the diary?"

Mr. Greyné blushed again.

"We think it was Thomas," he said.

Mademoiselle Verbèna looked at him steadily for a moment; then she cried:

"God bless you, monsieur!"

Mr. Greyné was startled by the abruptness of this pious ejaculation.

"Why?" he inquired.

"You are a good man. You, at least, would not condescend to insult a friendless woman by unworthy suspicions. And madame?"

"Mrs. Greyné"—stammered Mr. Greyné—"is convinced that it was Thomas. In fact—in fact, she was the first to say so."

Mademoiselle Verbèna tenderly pressed his hand.

"Madame is an angel. God bless you both!"

She tottered into her cabin, and, as she shut the door, Mr. Greyné heard

the terrible, laughing hysterics beginning again.

The next day an influence from Africa seemed spread upon the sea. Calm were the waters, calm and blue. No cloud appeared in the sky. The fierce activities of the ship had ceased, and Mademoiselle Verbèna tripped upon the deck at an early hour, to find Mr. Greyné already installed there and looking positively cheerful. He started up as he perceived her, and chivalrously escorted her to a chair.

Everyone who has made a voyage knows that the sea breeds intimacies. By the time the white houses of Algiers rose on their hill out of the bosom of the waves, Mademoiselle Verbèna and Mr. Greyné were—shall we say like sister and brother? She had told him all about her childhood in dear Paris, the death of her father, the count, murmuring the name of Louis XVI, the poverty of her mother, the countess, her own resolve to put aside all aristocratic prejudices and earn her own living. He, in return, had related his Eton days, his momentary bias toward the militia, his marriage—as an innocent youth—with Miss Eugenia Hannibal-Barker. Coming to later times, he was led to confide to the tender-hearted Levantine the fact that he hoped to increase his stock of knowledge while in Africa. Without alluding to "Catherine" he hinted that the cure of influenza was not his only reason for foreign travel.

"I wish to learn something of men and—and women," he murmured, in the shell-like ear presented to him. "Of their passions, their desires, their—their follies."

"Ah!" cried Mademoiselle Verbèna. "Would that I could assist monsieur! But I am only an ignorant little creature, and know nothing of the world! And I shall be ever at the bedside of mama."

"You will give me your address? You will let me inquire for the countess?"

"Willingly, but I do not know where I shall be. There will be a

message at the wharf. To what hotel goes monsieur?"

"The Grand Hotel."

"I will write there when I have seen mama. And meanwhile——"

They were coming into harbor. The heights of Mustapha were visible, the woods of the Bois de Boulogne, the towers of the Hotel Splendid.

"Meanwhile, may I beg monsieur not to——?" She hesitated.

"Not to what?" asked Mr. Greyne, most softly.

"Not to let anyone in England know that I am here?"

She paused. Mr. Greyne was silent, wondering. Mademoiselle Verbena drooped her head.

"The world is so censorious. It might seem strange that I—that monsieur—a man, young, handsome, fascinating—the same ship—I have no chaperon—*enfin*——"

She could get out no more. Her delicacy, her forethought touched Mr. Greyne to tears.

"Not a word," he said. "You are right. The world is evil, and, as you say, I am a—not a word!"

He ventured to press her hand, as an elder brother might have pressed it. For the first time he realized that even to the husband of Mrs. Eustace Greyne the world might attribute—Goodness gracious! What might not the militia think, for instance?

He felt himself, for one moment, potentially a dog.

They parted in a whirl of Arabs on the quay. Mr. Greyne would have stayed to assist Mademoiselle Verbena, but she bade him go. She whispered that she thought it "better" that they should not seem too—*enfin!*

"I will write tomorrow," she murmured. "*Au revoir!*"

On the last word, she was gone. Mr. Greyne saw nothing but Arabs and hotel porters. Loneliness seemed to close in on him once more.

That very evening, after a cup of tea, he presented himself at the office of Rook near the Place du Gouvernement. As he came in he felt a little

nervous. There were no tourists in the office, and a courteous clerk with a bright and searching eye at once took him in hand.

"What can we do for you, sir?"

"I am a stranger here," began Mr. Greyne.

"Quite so, sir, quite so."

The clerk twiddled his businesslike thumbs, and looked inquiring.

"And being so," Mr. Greyne went on, "it is naturally my wish to see as much of the town as possible; as much as possible, you understand."

"You want a guide? Alphonso!"

Turning, he shouted to an inner room, from which in a moment emerged a short, stout, swarthy personage, with a Jewish nose, a French head, an Arab eye with a squint in it, and a markedly Maltese expression.

"This is an excellent guide, sir," said the clerk. "He speaks twenty-five languages."

The stout man, who—as Mr. Greyne now perceived—had on a Swiss suit of clothes, a panama hat, and a pair of German elastic-sided boots, confessed in pigeon English, interspersed occasionally with a word or two of something which Mr. Greyne took to be Chinese, that such was undoubtedly the case.

"What do you wish to see, sir? The mosque, the bazaars, St. Eugène, La Trappe, Mustapha, the baths of the Etat-Major, the Jardin d'Essai, the Villa-Anti-Juif, the——"

"One moment!" said Mr. Greyne.

He turned to the clerk.

"May I take a chair?"

"Be seated, sir, pray be seated, and confer with Alphonso."

So saying, he gave himself to an enormous ledger, while Mr. Greyne took a chair opposite to Alphonso, who stood in a Moorish attitude looking apparently in the direction of Marseilles.

"I have come here," said Mr. Greyne, lowering his voice, "with a purpose."

"You wish to see the Belle Fatma. I will arrange it. She receives every evening in her house in the Rue——"

"One minute! One minute! You said the something 'Fatma'?"

"The Belle Fatma, the most beautiful woman of Africa. She receives every——"

"Pardon me! One moment! Is this lady——?"

Mr. Greyne paused.

"Sir?" said Alphonso, settling his Spanish necktie, and gazing steadily toward Marseilles.

"Is this lady—well, sinful?"

Alphonso threw up his hands with a wild Asiatic gesture.

"Sinful! La Belle Fatma. She is a lady of the utmost respectability known to all the town. You go to her house at eight, you take coffee upon the red sofas, you talk with La Belle, you see the dances and hear the music. Do not fear, sir, it is good, it is respectable as England, your country——"

"If it is respectable I don't want to see it," interposed Mr. Greyne. "It would be a waste of time."

The clerk lifted his head from the ledger, and Alphonso, by means of standing with his back almost square to Mr. Greyne, and looking over his right shoulder, succeeded at length in fixing his eye upon him.

"I have not traveled here to see respectable things," continued Mr. Greyne, with a slight blush. "Quite the contrary."

"Sir?"

The voice of Alphonso seemed to have changed, to have taken on a hard, almost a menacing tone. Mr. Greyne thought of his beloved wife, of Merrin's exercise books, and clenched his hands, endeavoring to feel, and to go on, like a militiaman.

"Quite the contrary," he repeated, firmly; "my object in coming to Africa is to—to search about in the Kasbah, and the disrep——" He choked, recovered himself and continued, "disreputable quarters of Algiers—hem——"

"What for, sir?"

The voice of Alphonso was certainly changed.

"What for?" said Mr. Greyne, growing purple. "For frailty."

"Sir?"

"For frailty—for wickedness."

A slight cackle emanated from the ledger, but immediately died away. A dead silence reigned in the office, broken only by the distant sound of the sea, and by the hard breathing of Alphonso, who had suddenly begun to pant.

"I wish to go to all the wicked places—all!"

The ledger cackled again more audibly. Mr. Greyne felt a prickling sensation run over him, but the thought of "Catherine" nerved him to his awful task.

"It is my wife's express desire that I should do so," he added, desperately, quite forgetting Mrs. Greyne's injunction to keep her dark in his desire to stand well with Rook's.

The ledger went off into a hyena imitation, and Alphonso, turning still more away from Mr. Greyne, so as to get the eye fuller upon him, exclaimed, in a mixture of Aryan and Eurasian languages:

"Sir, I am a respectable, unmarried man. I was born in Buenos Ayres, educated in Smyrna, came of age in Constantinople, and have practiced as guide in Bagdad and other particular cities. I refuse to have anything to do with you and your wife."

So saying, he bounced into the inner room and banged the door, while the ledger gave itself up to peals of merriment, and Mr. Greyne tottered forth upon the sea front, bathed in a cold perspiration and feeling more guilty than a murderer.

It was a staggering blow. He leaned over the stone parapet of the low wall, and let the soft breezes from the bay flit through his hair, and thought of Mrs. Greyne spurned by Alphonso. What was he to do? Kicked out of Rook's, to whom could he apply? There must be wickedness in Algiers, but where? He saw none, though night was falling and stout Frenchmen were already intent upon their absinthe.

"Does monsieur wish to see the Kasbah tonight?"

Was it a voice from heaven? He turned, and saw standing beside him a

tall, thin, audacious-looking young man, with coal-black mustaches, magnificent eyes, and an air that was half-languid, half-serpentine.

"Who are you?"

"I am a guide, monsieur. Here are my certificates."

He produced from the inner pocket of his coat a large bundle of dirty papers.

"If monsieur will deign to look them over."

But Mr. Greyne waved them away. What did he care for certificates? Here was a guide to African frailty. That was sufficient. He was in a desperate mood, and uttered desperate words.

"Look here," he said, rapidly, "are you wicked?"

"Very wicked, monsieur."

"Good!"

"Wicked, monsieur."

"Right!"

"Wrong, monsieur."

"I mean that it is good for me that you are wicked."

"Monsieur is very good."

"Yes, but I wish to be—that is, to see the other thing. Can you undertake to show me everything shocking in Algiers?"

"But certainly, monsieur. For a consideration."

"Name your price."

"Two hundred pounds, monsieur."

Mr. Greyne started. It seemed a high figure.

"Monsieur thought it would be more? I make a special price, because I have taken a fancy to monsieur. I remove fifty pounds. Monsieur, of course, will pay all expenses."

"Of course, of course."

It was no time to draw back.

"How long will it take?"

"To see all the shocking?"

"Precisely."

"There is a good deal. A fortnight, three weeks. It depends on monsieur. If he is strong, and can do without sleep—"

"We shall have to be up at night?"

"Naturally."

"I shall go to bed during the day, and get through it in a fortnight."

"Perfectly."

"Be at the Grand Hotel tonight at ten o'clock precisely."

"At ten o'clock I will be there. Monsieur will pay a little in advance?"

"Here are twenty pounds," cried Mr. Greyne, recklessly.

The audacious-looking young man took the notes with decision, made a graceful salute, and disappeared in the direction of the quay, while Mr. Greyne walked to his hotel, flushed with excitement, and feeling like the most desperate criminal in Africa. If the militia could see him now!

At dinner he drank a bottle of champagne, and afterward smoked a strong cigar over his coffee and liqueur. As he was finishing these frantic enjoyments, the head-waiter—a personage bearing a strong resemblance to an enlarged edition of Napoleon the First—approached him rather furtively, and, bending down, whispered in his ear:

"A gentleman has called to take monsieur to the Kasbah."

Mr. Greyne started, and flushed a guilty red.

"I will come in a moment," he answered, trying to assume a nonchalant voice, such as that in which a hardened major of dragoons announces that in his time he was a devil of a fellow.

The head-waiter retired, looking painfully intelligent, and Mr. Greyne sprang upstairs, seized a Merrin's exercise book and a lead pencil, put on a dark overcoat, popped one of the Springfield revolvers into the pocket of it, and hastened down into the hall of the hotel, where the audacious-looking young man was standing, surrounded by saucy chasseurs in gay liveries and peaked caps, by Algerian waiters, and by German-Swiss porters, all of whom were smiling and looking choke-full of sympathetic comprehension.

"Ha!" said Mr. Greyne, still in the major's voice. "There you are!"

"Behold me, monsieur."

"That's good."

"Wicked, monsieur."

"Well, let's be off to the mosque."

One of the chasseurs—a child of

eight who was thankful that he knew no better—burst into a piping laugh. The waiters turned hastily away, and the German-Swiss porters retreated to the bureau with some activity.

"To the mosque—precisely, monsieur," returned the guide, with complete self-possession.

They stepped out at once upon the pavement, where a carriage was in waiting.

"Where are we going?" inquired Mr. Greyne, in an anxious voice.

"We are going to the heights to see the Ouled," replied the guide. "*En avant!*"

He bounded in beside Mr. Greyne, the coachman cracked his whip, the horses trotted, and they were off upon their terrible pig race.

ON the following afternoon, at a quarter to three, when Mr. Greyne came down to breakfast, he found, lying beside the boiled eggs, a note directed to him in a feminine handwriting. He tore it open with trembling fingers, and read as follows:

I, RUE DU PETIT NÈGRE.

DEAR MONSIEUR:

I am here. Poor mama is in the hospital. I am allowed to see her twice a day. At all other times I remain alone, praying and weeping. I trust that monsieur has passed a good night. For me, I was sleepless, thinking of mama. I go now to church.

ADÈLE VERBÈNA.

He laid this missive down and sighed deeply. How strangely innocent it was, how simple, how sincere! There were white souls in Algiers, yes, even in Algiers. Strange that he should know one! Strange that he, who had filled a Merrin's exercise book with tiny writing, and had even overflowed on to the cover after "crossing" many pages, should receive the childlike confidences of one! "I go now to the church." Tears came into his eyes as he laid the letter down beside a pile of buttered toast over which the burning afternoon sun of Africa was shining.

"Monsieur will take milk and sugar?"

It was the head-waiter's Napoleonic voice. Mr. Greyne controlled himself. The man was smiling intelligently. All the staff of the hotel smiled intelligently at Mr. Greyne today; the waiters, the porters, the chasseurs. The child of eight, who was thankful that he knew no better, had greeted him with a merry laugh as he came down to breakfast, and an "*Oh, là, là!*" which had elicited a rebuke from the proprietor. Indeed, a wave of human sympathy flowed upon Mr. Greyne, whose ashy face and dull, washed-out eyes betrayed the severity of his night watch. "Monsieur will feel better after a little food."

The head-waiter handed the buttered toast with bland majesty, at the same time shooting a reproving glance at the little chasseur, who was peeping from behind the door at the afternoon breakfast.

"I feel perfectly well," replied Mr. Greyne, with an attempt at cheerfulness.

"Still, monsieur will feel much better after a little food."

Mr. Greyne began to toy with an egg.

"You know Algiers?" he asked.

"I was born here, monsieur. If monsieur wishes to explore tonight again the Kasbah I can—"

But Mr. Greyne stopped him with a gesture that was almost fierce.

"Where is the Rue du Petit Nègre?"

"Monsieur wishes to go there to-night?"

"I wish to go there now, directly I have finished break—lunch."

The head-waiter's face was wreathed with humorous surprise.

"But monsieur is wonderful—superb! Never have I seen a traveler like monsieur!"

He gazed at Mr. Greyne with tropical appreciation.

"Monsieur had better have a carriage. The street is difficult to find."

"Order me one. I shall start at once."

Mr. Greyne pushed away the sunlit buttered toast, and got up.

"Monsieur is superb. Never have I seen a traveler like monsieur."

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Napoleon's voice was almost reverent. He hastened out, followed slowly by Mr. Greyne.

"A carriage for monsieur! Monsieur desires to go to the Rue du Petit Nègre!"

The staff of the hotel gathered about the door as if to speed a royal personage, and Mr. Greyne noticed that their faces, too, were touched with an almost startled reverence. He stepped into the carriage, signed feebly, but with determination, to the Arab coachman, and was driven away, followed by a parting "*Oh, là là!*" from the chasseur, uttered in a voice that sounded shrill with sheer amazement.

Through winding, crowded streets he went, by bazaars and Moorish bath-houses, mosques and Catholic churches, barracks and cafés, till at length the carriage turned into an alley that crept up a steep hill. It moved on a little way, and then stopped.

"Monsieur must descend here," said the coachman. "Mount the steps, go to the right and then to the left. Near the summit of the hill he will find the Rue du Petit Nègre. Shall I wait for monsieur?"

"Yes."

The coachman began to make a cigarette, while Mr. Greyne set forth to follow his directions, and, at length, stood before an arch, which opened into a courtyard adorned with orange-trees in tubs, and paved with blue and white tiles. Around this courtyard was a three-story house with a flat roof, and from a bureau near a little fountain a stout Frenchwoman called to demand his business. He asked for Mademoiselle Verbèna, and was at once shown into a saloon lined with chairs covered with yellow rep, and begged to take a seat. In two minutes Mademoiselle Verbèna appeared, drying her eyes with a tiny pocket-handkerchief, and forcing a little pathetic smile of welcome. Mr. Greyne clasped her hand in silence. She sat down in a rep chair at his right, and they looked at each other.

"*Mais, mon Dieu!* How monsieur is changed!" cried the Levantine. "If

madame could see him! What has happened to monsieur?"

"Miss Verbèna," replied Mr. Greyne, "I have seen the Ouled on the heights."

A spasm crossed the Levantine's face. She put her handkerchief to it for a moment.

"What is an Ouled?" she inquired, withdrawing it.

"I dare not tell you," he replied, solemnly.

"But indeed I wish to know, so that I may sympathize with monsieur."

Mr. Greyne hesitated, but his heart was full; he felt the need of sympathy. He looked at Mademoiselle Verbèna, and a great longing to unburden himself overcame him.

"An Ouled," he replied, "is a dancing-girl from the desert of Sahara."

"*Mon Dieu!* How does she dance? Is it a valse, a polka, a quadrille?"

"No. Would that it were!"

And Mr. Greyne, unable further to govern his desire for full expression, gave Mademoiselle Verbèna a slightly Bowdlerized description of the dances of the desert. She heard him with amazement.

"How terrible!" she exclaimed, when he had finished. "And does one pay much to see such steps of the Evil One?"

"I gave her twenty pounds. Abdallah Jack——"

"Abdallah Jack?"

"My guide informed me that was the price. He tells me it is against the law, and that each time an Ouled dances she risks being thrown into prison."

"Poor lady! How sad to have to earn one's bread by such devices, instead of by teaching to the sweet little ones of monsieur the sympathetic grammar of one's native country."

Mr. Greyne was touched to the quick by this allusion, which brought, as in a vision, the happy home in Belgrave Square before him.

"You are an angel!" he exclaimed.

Mademoiselle Verbèna shook her head.

"And this poor Ouled, you will go to her again?"

"Yes. It seems that she is in communication with all the—the—well, all the odd people of Algiers, and that one can only get at them through her."

"Indeed?"

"Abdallah Jack tells me that while I am here I should pay her a weekly salary and that, in return, I shall see all the terrible ceremonies of the Arabs. I have decided to do so——"

"Ah, you have decided!"

For a moment, Mr. Greyne started. There seemed a new sound in Mademoiselle Verbèna's voice, a gleam in her dark brown eyes.

"Yes," he said, looking at her in wonder. "But I have not yet told Abdallah Jack."

The Levantine looked gently sad again.

"Ah," she said, in her usual pathetic voice. "How my heart bleeds for this poor Ouled. By the way, what is her name?"

"Aishoush."

"She is beautiful?"

"I hardly know. She was so painted, so tattooed, so very—so very different from Mrs. Eustace Greyne."

"How sad! How terrible! Ah, but you must long for the dear bonnet-strings of madame?"

Did he? As she spoke, Mr. Greyne asked himself the question. Shocked as he was, fatigued by his researches, did he wish that he were back again in Belgrave Square, drinking barley water, pasting notices of his wife's achievements into the new album, listening while she read aloud from the manuscript of her latest novel? He wondered and—how strange, how almost terrible—he was not sure.

"Is it not so?" murmured Mademoiselle Verbèna.

"Naturally, I miss my beloved wife," said Mr. Greyne, with a certain awkwardness. "How is your poor, dear mother?"

Tears came at once into the Levantine's eyes.

"Very, very ill, monsieur. Still, there is a chance—just a chance that

she may not die. Ah, when I sit here all alone in this strange place, I feel that she will perish, that soon I shall be quite deserted in this cruel, cruel world!"

The tears began to flow down her cheeks with determination. Mr. Greyne was terribly upset.

"You must cheer up," he exclaimed.

"You must hope for the best."

"Sitting here alone, how can I?"

She sobbed.

"Sitting here alone—very true!"

A sudden thought, a number of sudden thoughts, struck him.

"You must not sit here alone."

"Monsieur!"

"You must come out. You must drive. You must see the town, distract yourself."

"But how? Can a—a girl go about alone in Algiers?"

"Heaven forbid! No, I will escort you."

"Monsieur!"

A smile of innocent, girlish joy transformed her face, but suddenly she was grave again.

"Would it be right, *convenable*?"

Mr. Greyne was reckless. The dog potential rose up in him again.

"Why not? And, besides, who knows us here? Not a soul."

"That is true."

"Put on your bonnet. Let us start at once!"

"But I do not wear the bonnet. I am not like madame."

"To be sure. Your hat."

And as she flew to obey him, Mr. Eustace Greyne found himself impiously thanking the powers that be for this strange chance of going on the spree with a toque. When Mademoiselle Verbèna returned, he was looking almost rakish. He eyed her neat black hat and close-fitting black jacket with a glance not wholly unlike that of a militiaman. In her hand she held a vivid scarlet parasol.

"Monsieur," she said, "it is terrible, this *ombrelle*, when mama lies at death's door. But what can I do? I have no other and cannot afford to buy one. The sun is fierce. I dare

not expose myself to it without a shelter."

She seemed really distressed as she opened the parasol, and spread the vivid silk above her pretty black-clothed figure; but Mr. Greyne thought the effect was brilliant, and ventured to say so. As they passed the bureau by the fountain on their way out, the stout Frenchwoman cast an approving glance at *Mademoiselle Verbena*.

"The little rat will not see much more of the little negro now," she murmured to herself. "After all, the English have their uses."

VI

IN Belgrave Square, Mrs. Eustace Greyne was beginning to get slightly uneasy. Several things combined to make her so. In the first place, *Mademoiselle Verbena* had never returned from her mother's Parisian bedside, and had not even written a line to say how the dear parent was and when the daughter's nursing occupation was likely to be over. In the second place, Adolphus, in consequence of the Levantine's absence, had totally lost his grasp, always uncertain, upon the regular verbs. In the third place, Daffell, the valet, had returned to London the day after his departure from it, minus not only his master's dressing-case, but minus everything he possessed. His story was that, while waiting at the station in Paris for his master's appearance, he had entered into conversation with an agreeable stranger, and been beguiled into the acceptance of an absinthe at a café just outside. After swallowing the absinthe, he remembered nothing more till he came to himself in a deserted waiting-room at the Gare du Nord, back to which he had been mysteriously conveyed. In his pocket was no money, no watch, only the return half of a second-class ticket from London to Paris. He, therefore, wandered about the streets till morning broke, and then came back to London, a crest-fallen and miserable man, bemoaning his untoward fate, and cursing "them

blasted Frenchies" from the bottom of his British heart.

Mrs. Greyne's anxiety on her husband's behalf, now that he was thrown absolutely unattended upon the inhospitable shores of Africa, was not lessened by a fourth circumstance, which indeed worried her far more than all the others put together. This was Mr. Greyne's prolonged absence from her side. Precisely one calendar month had now elapsed since he had buried his face in her prune bonnet-strings at Victoria Station, and there seemed no prospect of his return. He wrote to her, indeed, frequently, and his letters were full of wistful regret and longing to be once more safe in the old home-stead in Belgrave Square, drinking barley water and pasting Romeike & Curtice notices into the new album which lay, gaping for him, upon the table of his sanctum. But he did not come; nay, more, he wrote plainly that there was no prospect of his coming for the present. It seemed that the wickedness of Africa was very difficult to come at. It did not lie upon the surface, but was hidden far down in depths to which the ordinary tourist found it almost impossible to penetrate. In his numerous letters, Mr. Greyne described his heroic and unremitting exertions to fill the Merrin's note-books with matter that would be suitable for the purging of humanity. He set out in full his interview with Alphonso at the office of Rook, and his definite rejection by that cosmopolitan official. According to the letters, after this event he had spent no less than a fortnight searching in vain for any sign of wickedness in the Algerian capital. He had frequented the cafés, the public bars, the theatres, the churches. He had been to the Velodrome. He had sat by the hour in the Jardin d'Essai. At night he had strolled in the fairs and hung about the circus. Yet nowhere had he been able to perceive anything but the most innocent pleasure, the simple merriment of a gay and guileless population to whom the idea of crime seemed as foreign as the idea of singing the English national anthem.

During the third week it was true that matters—always according to Mr. Greyne's letters home—slightly improved. While walking near the quay, in active search for nautical outrage, he saw an Arab dock laborer, who had been over-smoking kief, run amuck and knock down a couple of respectable snake-charmers who were on the point of embarkation for Tunis with their reptiles. This incident had filled up a half-score of pages in exercise-book number one, and had flooded Mr. Greyne with hope and aspiration. But it was followed by a stagnant lull which had lasted for days, and had only been disturbed by the trifling incident of a gentleman in the Jewish quarter of the town setting fire to a neighbor's bazaar, in the very natural endeavor to find a French halfpenny, which he had chanced to drop among a bale of carpets while looking in to drive a soft bargain. As Mrs. Greyne wired to Algiers, such incidents were of no value to "Catherine."

A very active interchange of views had gone on between the husband and wife as time went by, and the book was at a standstill. At first, Mrs. Greyne contented herself with daily letters, but latterly she had resorted to wires, explanatory, condemnatory, hortatory and even comminatory. She began bitterly to regret her husband's well-proven innocence, and wished she had despatched an uncle of hers by marriage, an ex-captain in the Royal Navy who, she began to feel certain, would have been able to find far more frailty in Algiers than poor Eustace, in his simplicity, would ever come at. She even began to wish that she had crossed the sea in person, and herself boldly set about the ingathering of the material for which she was so impatiently waiting.

Her uneasiness was brought to a head by a letter from a house-agent, stating that the corner mansion in Park Lane next to the Duke of Ebury's was being nibbled at by a Venezuelan millionaire. She wired this terrible fact at once to Africa, adding—at an enormous expenditure of cash:

This will never do. You are too innocent, and cannot see what lies before you. Obtain assistance. Go to the British consul.

Mr. Greyne at once cabled back:

Am following your advice. Will wire result. Regret my innocence, but am distressed that you should so utterly condemn it.

Upon receiving this telegram at night before a lonely dinner, Mrs. Eustace Greyne was deeply moved. She felt she had been hasty. She knew that to very few women was it given to have a husband so free from all masculine infirmities as Mr. Greyne. At the same time there was "Catherine," there was the mansion in Park Lane, there was the Venezuelan millionaire. She began to feel distracted, and, for the first time in her life, refused to partake of sweetbreads fried in mushroom catchup, a dish which she had greatly affected from the time when she wrote her first short story. While she was in the very act of waving away this delicacy, a footman came in with a foreign telegram. She opened it quickly, and read as follows:

British consul horrified; was ignominiously expelled from consulate; great scandal; am much upset, but will never give in, for your sake.

EUSTACE.

As the dread meaning of these words penetrated at length to Mrs. Greyne's voluminous brain, a deep flush overspread her noble features. She rose from the table with a determination that struck awe to the hearts of the powdered underlings, and, drawing herself up to her full height, exclaimed:

"Send Mrs. Forbes at once to my study, if you please—at once, do you understand?"

In a moment Mrs. Forbes, who was the great novelist's maid, appeared on the threshold of the oracle's lair. She was a sober-looking, black-silk personage, who always wore a pork-pie cap in the house, and a Mother Hubbard bonnet out of it. Having been in service with Mrs. Greyne ever since the latter penned her last minor poetry—Mrs. Greyne had been a minor poet for three years soon after she put her hair up—Mrs. Forbes had acquired a certain lit-

erary expression of countenance, and a manner that was decidedly prosy. She read a good deal after her supper of an evening, and was wont to be the arbiter when any literary matter was discussed in the servants' hall.

"Madam?" she said, respectfully entering the room and bending the pork-pie cap forward in an attentive attitude.

Mrs. Greyne was silent for a moment. She appeared to be thinking deeply. Mrs. Forbes gently closed the door, and sighed. It was nearly her supper time, and she felt pensive.

"Madam?" she said again.

Mrs. Greyne looked up. A strange fire burned in her large eyes.

"Mrs. Forbes," she said, at length, with weighty deliberation, "the mission of woman in the world is a great one."

"Very true, madam. My own words to Butler Phillips no longer ago than dinner this midday."

"It is the protecting of man—neither more nor less."

"My own statement, madam, to Second Footman Archibald, this self-same day at the tea board."

"Man needs guidance and looks for it to us—or, rather, to me."

At the last word, Mrs. Forbes pinched her lips together and appeared older than her years, and sourer than her normal temper.

"At this moment, Mrs. Forbes," continued Mrs. Greyne, with rising fervor, "he looks for it to me from Africa. From that dark continent he stretches forth his hands to me in humble supplication."

"Mr. Greyne has not been taken with another of his bilious attacks, I hope, madam?" said Mrs. Forbes.

Mrs. Greyne smiled. The ignorance of the humbly born entertained her. It was so simple, so transparent.

"You fail to understand me," she answered. "But never mind. Others have done the same."

She thought of her reviewers. Mrs. Forbes smiled. She also could be entertained.

"Madam?" she inquired once more, after a pause.

"I shall leave for Africa tomorrow

morning," said Mrs. Greyne. "You will accompany me."

There was a dead silence.

"You will accompany me. Do you understand? Obtain assistance from the housemaids in the packing. Select my quietest gowns, my least conspicuous bonnets. I have my reasons for wishing, while journeying to Africa and remaining there, to pass, if possible, unnoticed."

Again there was a pause. Mrs. Greyne looked up at Mrs. Forbes, and observed a dogged expression upon her countenance.

"What is the matter?" she asked the maid.

"Do we go by Paris, madam?" said Mrs. Forbes.

"Certainly."

"Then, madam, I'm very sorry, but I couldn't risk it, not if it was ever so—"

"Why not? Why this fear of Lutetia?"

"Madam, I'm not afraid of any Lutetia as ever wore apron, but, to go to Paris to be drugged with absint, and put away in a third-class waiting-room like a package, I couldn't, madam, not even if I have to leave your service."

Mrs. Greyne recognized that the episode of the valet had struck home to the lady's maid.

"But you will not leave my side."

"They will absint you, madam."

"But you will travel first in a sleeping-car."

Mrs. Forbes put up her hand to her pork-pie cap, as if considering.

"Very well, madam, to oblige you I will undergo it," she said, at length.

"But I would not do the like for another living lady."

"I will raise your wages. You are a faithful creature."

"Does master expect us, madam?" asked Mrs. Forbes, as she prepared to retire.

A bright and tender look stole into Mrs. Greyne's intellectual face.

"No," she replied.

She turned her large and beaming eyes full upon the maid.

"Mrs. Forbes," she said, with an

amount of emotion that was very rare in her, "I am going to tell you a great truth."

"Madam?" said Mrs. Forbes, respectfully.

"The sweetest moments of life, those which lift man nearest heaven and make him thankful for the great gift of existence, are sometimes those which are unforeseen."

She was thinking of Mr. Greyne's ecstasy when, upon the inhospitable African shore where he was now enduring such tragic misfortunes, he perceived the majestic form of his loved one—his loved one whom he believed to be in Belgrave Square—coming toward him to soothe, to comfort, to direct. She brushed away a tear.

"Go, Mrs. Forbes," she said.

And Mrs. Forbes retired, smiling.

An epic might well be written on the great novelist's journey to Africa, upon her departure from Charing Cross, shrouded in a black gauze veil, her silent thought as the good ship *Empress* rode cork-like upon the Channel waves, her ascetic lunch—a captain's biscuit and a glass of water—at the buffet at Calais, her arrival in Paris when the shades of night had fallen. An epic might well be written. Perhaps some day it will be, by herself.

In Paris she suffered a good deal on account of Mrs. Forbes, who, in her fear of "absint," became hysterical, and caused not a little annoyance by accusing various inoffensive French travelers of nefarious designs upon her property and person. In the Gulf of Lyons she suffered even more, and as, unluckily, the wind was contrary and the sea prodigious during the whole of the passage across the Mediterranean, both she and Mrs. Forbes arrived at Algiers four hours late, in a condition which may be more easily imagined than properly described.

Genius in thrall to the body, and absolutely dependent upon green chartreuse for its flickering existence, is no subject for even a sympathetic pen. Sufficient to say that, when the ship came in under the lights of Algiers, the crowd of shouting Arabs was struck to

silence by the spectacle of Mrs. Greyne and Mrs. Forbes endeavoring to disembark, in bonnets that were placed seaward upon the head instead of landward, unbuttoned boots, and gowns soaked with the attentions of the waves.

After being gently and permanently relieved of their light hand-luggage, the mistress and maid, who seemed greatly overwhelmed by the sight of Africa, and who moved—or rather were carried—as in a dream, were placed reverently in the nearest omnibus and conveyed to the farthest hotel, which was situated upon a lofty hill above the town. Here a slightly painful scene took place.

Having been assisted by the staff into a Moorish hall, Mrs. Greyne inquired in a reticent voice for her husband, and was politely informed that there was no person of the name of Greyne in the hotel. For a moment, she seemed threatened with dissolution, but with a supreme effort calling upon her mighty brain she surmised that her husband was possibly passing under a pseudonym in order to throw America off the scent. She therefore demanded to have the guests then present in the hotel at once paraded before her. As there was some difficulty about this—the guests being then at dinner—she whispered for the visitors' book, thinking that perchance Mr. Greyne had inscribed his name there, and that the staff, being foreign, did not recognize it as murmured by herself. The book was brought, upon its cover in golden letters the words: "Hôtel Loubet et Majestic." Then explanations of a somewhat disagreeable nature occurred, and Mrs. Greyne and Mrs. Forbes, after a heavy payment had been exacted for their conveyance to a place they had desired not to go to, were carried forth and consigned to another vehicle which at length brought them, on the stroke of nine, to the Grand Hotel.

Having been placed reverently in the brilliantly lighted hall, they were surrounded by the proprietor, the *maitre d'hôtel* and his assistants, the porters, and the chasseurs, with all of whom Mr. Greyne was now familiar. Brandy

and water having been supplied, together with smelling-salts and burnt feathers, Mrs. Greyne roused herself from an acute attack of lethargy and asked for Mr. Greyne. A joyous smile ran round the circle.

"Monsieur Greyne," said the proprietor, "who is living here for the winter?"

"Mr. Eustace Greyne," murmured the great novelist, grasping her bonnet with both hands.

The *maitre d'hôtel* drew nearer.

"Madame wishes to see Monsieur Greyne?" he asked.

"I do—at once."

A blessed consciousness of Mother Earth was gradually beginning to steal over her. She even strove feebly to sit up on her chair, a German-Swiss porter of enormous size assisting her.

"But Monsieur Greyne is out."

"Out?"

"Yes, madame. Monsieur Greyne is always out at night."

The eyes of the little chasseur who knew no better began to twinkle. Mrs. Forbes gave a slight cough. Tears filled the novelist's eyes.

"God bless my Eustace!" she murmured, deeply touched by this evidence of his devotion to her interests.

"Madame says—?" asked the proprietor.

"Where does Mr. Greyne go?" inquired the novelist.

"To the Kasbah, madame."

"I knew it!" cried Mrs. Greyne, with returning animation. "I knew it would be so!"

"Madame is acquainted with Monsieur Greyne?" said the *maitre d'hôtel*, while the little crowd gathered more closely about the wave-worn group.

"I am Mrs. Eustace Greyne," returned the great novelist, recklessly. "I am the wife of Mr. Eustace Greyne."

There was a moment of supreme silence. Then a loud, an even piercing, "Oh, là, là!" broke upon the air, succeeded instantaneously by a burst of laughter that seemed to thrill with all the wild blessedness of boyhood. It came, of course, from the little chasseur; it came and stayed. Nothing

could stop it, and eventually the happy child had to be carried forth upon the sea front to enjoy his innocent mirth at leisure and in solitude beneath the African stars. Mrs. Greyne did not notice his disappearance. She was intent upon important matters.

"At what time does Mr. Greyne usually set forth?" she asked of the proprietor, whose face now bore a strangely twisted appearance, as if afflicted by a toothache.

"Immediately after dinner, madame, if not before. Of late, it has generally been before."

"And he stays out late?"

"Very late, madame."

The twisted appearance began to seem infectious. It was visible upon the faces of most of those surrounding Mrs. Greyne and Mrs. Forbes. Indeed, even the latter showed some signs of it, although the large shadow cast over her features by the hind side of her Mother Hubbard bonnet to some extent disguised them from the public view.

"Till what hour?" pursued Mrs. Greyne, in a voice of almost yearning tenderness and pity.

"Well, madame"—the proprietor displayed some slight confusion—"I really can hardly say. The *maitre d'hôtel* can perhaps inform you."

Mrs. Greyne turned her ox-like eyes upon the enlarged edition of Napoleon the First.

"Monsieur Greyne seldom returns before seven or eight o'clock in the morning, madame. He then retires to bed, and comes down to breakfast at about four o'clock in the afternoon."

Mrs. Greyne was touched to the very quick. Her husband was sacrificing his rest, his health, nay, perhaps even his very life in her service. It was well she had come, well that a period was to be put to these terrible researches. They should be stopped at once, even this very night. Better a thousand literary failures than that her husband's existence should be placed in jeopardy. She rose suddenly from her chair, tottered, gasped, recovered herself and spoke.

"Prepare dinner for me at once," she said, "and order a carriage and a competent guide to be before the door in half an hour."

"Madame is going out? But madame is ill, tired!"

"It matters not."

"Where does madame wish to go?"

"I am going to the Kasbah to find my husband."

"I will escort madame."

The proprietor, the *maitre d'hôtel*, the waiters, the porters, the chasseurs, Mrs. Greyne and Mrs. Forbes all turned about to face the determined speaker.

And there before them; his dark eyes gleaming, his long mustaches bristling fiercely—there stood Abdallah Jack.

VII

MAN is a self-deceiver. It must, therefore, ever be a doubtful point whether Mr. Eustace Greyne, during his residence in Africa, absolutely lost sight of his sense of duty; whether, beguiled by the lively attentions of a fiercely foreign town, he deliberately resolved to take his pleasure regardless of consequences and of the sacred ties of Belgrave Square. We prefer to think that some vague idea of combining two duties—that which he owed to himself, and that which he owed to Mrs. Greyne—moved him in all he did, and that the subterfuge into which he was undoubtedly led was not wholly self-ish, not wholly criminal. Nevertheless, that he had lied to his beloved wife is certain. Even while she sat over a cutlet and a glass of claret in the white-and-gold dining-room of the Grand Hotel, preparatory to her departure to the Kasbah with Abdallah Jack, the dozen of Merrin's exercise-books lay upstairs in Mr. Greyne's apartment filled to the brim with African frailty. Already there was material enough in their pages to furnish forth a library of "Catherines." Yet Mr. Greyne still lingered far from his home, and wired to that home fabricated accounts of the singular innocence of Algiers. He even allowed it

to be supposed that his own innocence stood in the way of his fulfilment of Mrs. Greyne's behests—he who could now have given points in knowledge of the world to whole regiments of militiamen!

It was not right, and doubtless he must stand condemned by every moralist. But let it not be forgotten that he had fallen under the influence of a Levantine.

Mademoiselle Verbèna's mother, hidden in some unnamed hospital of Algiers, appeared to be one of those ingenious elderly ladies who can hover indefinitely upon the brink of death without actually dying. During the whole time that Mr. Greyne had been in Africa, her state had been desperate, yet she still clung to life. As her daughter said, she possessed extraordinary vitality, and this vitality seemed to have been inherited by her child. Despite her grave anxieties, Mademoiselle Verbèna succeeded in sustaining a remarkable cheeriness, and even a fascinating vivacity, when in the company of others. As she said to Mr. Greyne, she did not think it right to lay her burdens upon the shoulders of her neighbors. She therefore forced herself to appear contented, even at various moments gay, when she and Mr. Greyne were lunching, dining, or supping together, were driving upon the front, sailing upon the azure waters of the bay, riding upon the heights beyond El-Biar, or, ensconced in a sumptuous private box, listening to the latest French farce at one or another of the theatres. Only one day, when they had driven out to the monastery at La Trappe de Staouéli, did a momentary cloud descend upon her piquant features, and she explained this by the frank confession that she had always wished to become a nun, but had been hindered from following her vocation by the necessity of earning money to support her aged parents.

Mr. Greyne had never seen the Ouled since his first evening in Algiers, but he still paid her a weekly salary, through Abdallah Jack, who explained to him that the interesting lady, in a

discreet retirement, was perpetually occupied in arranging the exhibitions of African frailty at which he so frequently assisted. She was, in fact, earning her liberal salary. Mademoiselle Verbèna and Abdallah Jack had met on several occasions, and Mr. Greyne had introduced the latter to the former as his guide, and had generously praised his abilities; but Mademoiselle Verbèna took very little notice of him, and, as time went on, Abdallah Jack seemed to conceive a most distressing dislike of her. On several occasions he advised Mr. Greyne not to frequent her company so assiduously, and when Mr. Greyne asked him to explain the meaning of his monitions he took refuge in vague generalities and Eastern imagery. He had a profound contempt for women as companions, which grieved Mr. Greyne's Western ideas, and evidently thought that Mademoiselle Verbèna ought to be clapped forthwith into a long veil, and put away in a harem behind an iron grille. When Mr. Greyne explained the English point of view, Abdallah Jack took refuge in a sulkily silence, but during the week immediately preceding the arrival of Mrs. Greyne, his temper had become actively bad, and Mr. Greyne began seriously to consider whether it would not be better to pay him a last *douceur* and tell him to go about his business.

Before doing this, however, Mr. Greyne desired to have one more interview with the mysterious Ouled on the heights, to whom he owed the knowledge which would henceforth enable him to cut out the militia. He said so to Abdallah Jack. The latter agreed sulkily to arrange it, and matters so fell out that on the night of Mrs. Greyne's arrival her husband was seated in a room in one of the remotest houses of the Kasbah, watching the Ouled's mysterious evolutions, while Mademoiselle Verbèna—as she herself had informed Mr. Greyne—sat in the hospital by the bedside of her still dying mother. Abdallah Jack had apparently been most anxious to assist at Mr. Greyne's interview with

the Ouled, but Mr. Greyne had declined to allow this. The evil temper of the guide was beginning to get thoroughly upon his employer's nerves, and even the natural desire to have an interpreter at hand was overborne by the dislike of Abdallah Jack's morose eyes and sarcastic speeches about women. Moreover, the Ouled spoke a word or two of uncertain French.

Thus, therefore, things fell out, and such was the precise situation when Mrs. Greyne flicked a crumb from her chocolate brocade gown, tied her bonnet-strings, and rose from table to set forth to the Kasbah with Abdallah Jack.

It was a radiant night. In the clear sky the stars shone brilliantly, looking down upon the persistent convulsions of the little chasseur, who had not yet recovered from his attack of merriment on learning who Mrs. Greyne was. The sea, quite calm now that the great novelist was no longer upon it, lapped softly along the curving shores of the bay. The palm trees of the town garden where the band plays on warm evenings waved lazily in the soft and scented breeze. The hooded figures of the Arabs lounged against the stone wall that girdles the sea front. In the brilliantly illuminated restaurants, the rich French population gathered about the little tables, while the withered beggars stared in upon the oyster shells, the champagne bottles and the feathers in the women's audacious hats.

When Mrs. Greyne emerged upon the pavement before the Grand Hotel, attended by Mrs. Forbes and the guide, she paused for a moment and cast a searching glance upon the fairy scene. In this voluptuous evening and strange environment life seemed oddly dream-like. She scarcely felt like Mrs. Greyne. Possibly Mrs. Forbes also felt unlike herself, for she suddenly placed one hand upon her left side and tottered. Abdallah Jack supported her. She screamed aloud.

"Madam!" she said. "It is the vertigo. I am overtook!"

She was really ill; her face indeed became the color of a plover's egg.

"Let me go to bed, madam," she implored. "It is the vertigo, madam. I am overtaken!"

Under ordinary circumstances, Mrs. Greyne would have prescribed a dose of Kasbah air, but tonight she felt strange and she wanted strangeness. Mrs. Forbes with the vertigo, in a small carriage, would be inappropriate. She therefore bade her retire, mounted into the vehicle with Abdallah Jack, and was quickly driven away, her bonnet-strings floating upon the winsome wind.

"You know my husband?" she asked, softly, of the guide.

Abdallah Jack replied in French that he rather thought he did.

"How is he looking?" continued Mrs. Greyne, in a slightly yearning voice. "My Eustace!" she added, to herself, "my devoted one!"

"Monsieur Greyne is pale as washed linen upon the Kasbah wall," replied Abdallah Jack, lighting a cigarette, and wreathing the great novelist in its gray-blue smoke. "He is thin as the Spahi's lance, he is nervous as the leaves of the eucalyptus tree when the winds blow from the north."

Mrs. Greyne was seriously perturbed.

"Would I had come before!" she murmured, with serious self-reproach.

"Monsieur Greyne is worse than all the English," pursued Abdallah Jack, in a voice that sounded to Mrs. Greyne decidedly sinister. "He is worse than the tourists of Rook, who laugh in the doorways of the mosques and twine in their hair the dried lizards of the Sahara. Even the guide of Rook rejected him. I only would undertake him because I am full of evil."

Mrs. Greyne began to feel distinctly uncomfortable, and to wish she had not been so ready to pander to Mrs. Forbes's vertigo. She stole a sidelong glance at her strange companion. The carriage was small. The end of his bristling black mustache was very near. What he said of Mr. Greyne did not disturb her, because she knew that her Eustace had sacrificed his

reputation to do her service; but what he said about himself was not reassuring.

"I think you must be doing yourself an injustice," she said, in a rather agitated voice.

"Madame?"

"I do not believe you are so bad as you imply," she continued.

The carriage turned with a jerk out of the brilliantly lighted thoroughfare that runs along the sea into a narrow side street, crowded with native Jews, and dark with shadows.

"Madame does not know me."

The exact truth of this observation struck home, like a dagger, to the mind of Mrs. Greyne.

"I am a wicked person," added Abdallah Jack, with a profound conviction. "That is why Monsieur Greyne chose me as his guide."

The novelist began to quake. Her chocolate brocade fluttered. Was she herself to learn at first hand, and on her first evening in Africa, enough about African frailty to last her for the rest of her life? And how much more of life would remain to her after her stock of knowledge had been thus increased? The carriage turned into a second side street, narrower and darker than the last.

"Are we going right?" she said, apprehensively.

"No, madame, we are going wrong—we are going to the wicked part of the city."

"But—but—you are sure Mr. Greyne will be there?"

Abdallah Jack laughed sardonically.

"Monsieur Greyne is never anywhere else. Monsieur Greyne is wicked as is a mad Touareg of the desert."

"I don't think you quite understand my husband," said Mrs. Greyne, feeling in duty bound to stand up for her poor, maligned Eustace. "Whatever he may have done he has done at my special request."

"Madame says?"

"I say that in all his proceedings while in Algiers, Mr. Greyne has been acting under my directions."

Abdallah Jack fixed his enormous eyes steadily upon her.

"You are his wife and told him to come here and to do as he has done?"

"Ye-yes," faltered Mrs. Greyne, for the first time in her life feeling as if she were being escorted toward the criminal dock by a jailer with Puritan tendencies.

"Then it is true what they say on the shores of the great canal," he remarked, composedly.

"What do they say?" inquired Mrs. Greyne.

"That England is a land of female devils," returned the guide, as the carriage plunged into a filthy alley, between two rows of blind houses, and began to ascend a steep hill.

Mrs. Greyne gasped. She opened her lips to protest vigorously, but her head swam—either from indignation or from fatigue—and she could not utter a word. The horses mounted like cats upward into the dense blackness, from which dropped down the faint sounds of squealing music and of hoarse cries and laughter. The wheels bounded over the stones, sank into the deep ruts, scraped against the sides of the unlighted houses. And Abdallah Jack sat staring at Mrs. Greyne as an English clergyman's wife might stare at the appalling rites of some deadly cannibal encountered in a far-off land, with a stony wonder, a sort of paralyzed curiosity.

Suddenly the carriage stopped on a piece of waste land covered with small pebbles. Abdallah Jack sprang out.

"Why do we stop?" said Mrs. Greyne, turning as pale as ashes.

"The carriage can go no further. Madame must walk."

Mrs. Greyne began to tremble.

"We are to leave the coachman?"

"I shall escort madame, alone."

The great novelist's tongue cleaved to the roof of her mouth. She felt like a Merrin's exercise-book, every leaf of which was covered with African frailty. However, there was no help for it. She had to descend and stand among the pebbles.

"Where are we going?"

Abdallah Jack waved his hand toward a stone rampart dimly seen in the faint light that emanated from the starry sky.

"Down there into the alley of the Dead Dervishes."

Mrs. Greyne could not repress a cry of horror. At that moment she would have given a thousand pounds to have Mrs. Forbes at her side.

Abdallah Jack grasped her by the hand and led her ruthlessly forward. Gazing with terror-stricken eyes over the crumbling rampart of the Kasbah, she saw the city far below her, the lights of the streets, the lights of the ships in harbor. She heard the music of a bugle, and wished she were a Zouave safe in barracks. She wished she were a German-Swiss porter, a merry chasseur, anything but Mrs. Eustice Greyne. One thing alone supported her in this hour of trial, the thought of her husband's ecstasy when she appeared upon the dread scene of his awful labors, to tell him that he was released, that he need visit them no more.

The alley of the Dead Dervishes is long and winding. To Mrs. Greyne it seemed endless. As she threaded it with faltering step, gripped by the feverish hand of Abdallah Jack, who now began to display a strange and terrible excitement, she became a centre of curiosity. Unwashed Arabs, rakish Zouaves in blue and red, wandering Jews of various nationalities, unveiled dancing-girls covered with jewels, stared in wonder upon the chocolate brocade and the floating bonnet-strings, followed upon her footsteps, pointing with painted fingers, and making remarks of a personal nature in French, Arabic and other unknown tongues. She moved in the midst of a crowd, on and on before lighted interiors from which wild music flowed.

"Shall we never be there?" she panted to Abdallah Jack. "My limbs refuse their office." She jogged against a Tunisian Jewess in a pointed hat, and rebounded upon an enormous Riff in a tattered sheepskin. "I can go no further."

"We are there! Behold the house of the Ouled!"

As he uttered the last word he burst into a bitter laugh, and drew Mrs. Greyne, now gasping for breath, through an open doorway into a little hall of imitation marble, with fluted pillars adorned with oilcloth, and walls hung with imported oleographs. From a chamber on the right, near a winding staircase covered with blue-and-white tiles, came the sound of laughter, of song, and of a hideous music conveyed to the astonished ear by pipes and drums.

"They are in there!" exclaimed Abdallah Jack, folding his arms and looking at Mrs. Greyne. "Go to your husband!"

Mrs. Greyne put her hands to her magnificent forehead and tottered forward. She reached the door, she pushed it, she entered. There upon a wooden dais, surrounded by gilt mirrors and artificial roses, she beheld her husband, in a check suit and a white Homburg hat, performing the wildest evolutions, while opposite him a lady, smothered in colored silks and coins, tattooed and painted, dyed and scented, covered with kohl and crowned with ostrich feathers, screamed a nasal chant of the East, and bounded like an electrified monkey.

"Eustace!" cried Mrs. Greyne, leaning for support against an oleograph.

Her husband turned.

"Eustace!" she cried again. "It is I!"

He stood as if turned to stone. Mrs. Greyne hesitated, started, moved forward to the dais and stared upon the Ouled, who had also ceased from dancing, and looked strangely surprised, even confused, by the great novelist's intrusion.

"Miss Verbèna!" she exclaimed. "Miss Verbèna in Algiers!"

"Eugenial!" said Mr. Greyne, in a husky voice, "what is this you say? This lady is the Ouled."

A sardonic laugh came from the doorway. They turned. There stood Abdallah Jack. He advanced roughly to the Ouled.

"Come," he said, angrily. "Have we not earned the money of the stranger? Have we not earned enough? Tomorrow you shall marry me as you have promised and we will return to our own land, to the canal where you and I were born. And nevermore shall the Levantine instruct the babes of the English devils, but dwell veiled and guarded in the harem of her master."

"Mademoiselle Verbèna!" said Mr. Greyne, in a more husky voice. "But—but—your dying mother?"

"She sleeps, monsieur, in the white sands of Ismailia, beside the bitter lake. I trust that madame can now go on with the respectable 'Catherine.'"

And with an ironic reverence to Mrs. Eustace Greyne, she placed her hand in Abdallah Jack's and vanished from the room.

"Catherine's Repentance," published in a gigantic volume not many weeks ago, was preceded by Mr. Eustace Greyne's. When last heard of he was seated in the magnificent library of the corner house in Park Lane next to the Duke of Ebury's, busily engaged in pasting the newspaper notices of Mrs. Greyne's greatest work into a superb new album.

The Abdallah Jacks have returned to the Suez Canal, bearing with them a snug little fortune to be invested in the purchase of a coal wharf at Port Said, and a remarkably handsome crocodile dressing-case, fitted with gold and monogrammed with the initials "E. G."



LIFE'S GRAMMAR

JOHNNY—What is the future of the verb "to marry"?
FATHER—Divorce.

ACHIEVEMENT

By Madison Cawein

WELL, what of it then, if your heart be weighed with the yoke
Of the world's neglect? and the smoke
Of doubt, blown into your eyes, make night of your road?
And the sting of the goad,
The merciless goad of scorn,
And the rise and fall
Of the whip of necessity gall,
Till your heart, forlorn,
Indignant, in rage would rebel;
And your bosom fill,
And sobbingly swell,
With bitterness, yea, against God and 'gainst Fate,
Fate, and the world and all men;
What of it then? . . .
Let it be as it will,
If you labor and wait,
You, too, will arrive, and the end for you, too, will be well.
What of it then? say I; yea, what of it then?

II

Well, what of it then? if the hate of the world and of men
Make wreck of your dreams again?
What of it then,
If contumely and sneer
And ignorant jibe and jeer
Be heaped upon all that you do and all that you dream;
And the irresistible stream
Of events overwhelm and submerge
All effort—or so it may seem? . . .
Not all, not all shall be lost,
Not all, in the merciless surge
And pitiless gurge!
Though you see it tempestuously tossed,
Though you see it sink down or sweep by,
Not in vain did you strive, not in vain!
The struggle, the longing and toil
Of hand and of heart and of brain,
Not in vain was it all, say I!
For out of the wild turmoil
And seething and soil
Of Time, some part of the whole will remain,
In spite of the wrath of the skies
And the hate of men. . . .
What of it then? say I; yea, what of it then?

ELUDED

DEEP in the night I heard
 The rain's mysterious word.
 (It was as if an old love spoke, a dead love sobbed and stirred.)

Deep in the night the great voice of the rain
 Called at my window-pane.
 (A voice more sad shall nevermore sing at my heart again.)

Deep in the night I listened to the cry
 Of the storm sweeping by.
 (It seemed to me I heard a ghost whisper and softly sigh.)

Oh, deep within the night, the last stars gone,
 I heard the rain pass on.
 (No lost love stepped within my room—only the pale, white dawn!)

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.



THE USUAL PROCESS

"GETTBLUE says that Miss Lightasaire has shaken his ideal of womanhood."

"Oh, that means that she has shaken *him*."



HIS PESSIMICOGITATION

"I SUSPECT," ruminatingly said the Old Codger, apropos of nothing in particular, "that if all men were mind-readers in the full sense of the term, and each was able to realize what every other person he met actually thought about him, there would be very little going on in this world but fights, law-suits and undertaking; and only the helplessly meek, the sublimely egotistical, the genuinely philosophical and the hopelessly idiotic would have any happiness in this life."

GRAN'FATHER COQUESNE

By Cosmo Hamilton

ON the heights above the village of Givonne, occupied a fortnight before Sedan by squadrons of Prussian cavalry and many regiments of infantry, stood an ancient crucifix. The sun of innumerable summers had shone upon the stone image of the Man of Sorrows. Hundreds of winter storms had frowned upon Him. Spring flowers had sprung up year after year at His feet, and around Him there had been many harvestings as autumn had succeeded autumn.

The Prince of Peace looked down upon a scene which contained no suggestion of flowers or harvestings. In the once unbustling cobbled street stood groups of soldiers. The market-place had become a huge stable, the ancient church the quarters of the staff. A few feeble old villagers slunk here and there among the enemies of their country, a few children stood gazing doubtfully at the horses, a few pale-faced, despairing women hurried on domestic errands.

The Prince of War held the country in his grip.

On the outskirts of the village, a stone's throw from the Meuse, alone, stood the cottage of Gran'father Coquesne, cobbler.

With the war, its rights and wrongs, its horrors, its triumphs, I am not concerned. It is Gran'father Coquesne who concerns me—ex-Sergeant Antoine Marie Armand Coquesne, of the Imperial Guard, upon whose breast Napoleon had pinned with his own hands a medal for distinguished conduct in the field; Gran'father Co-

quesne, cobbler, the man who had lived too long.

Seated on a backless chair beside a tool-bench under the one window of the living-room, bent double over a woman's boot which was pressed between his trembling knees, was an old, gaunt man. His white hair hung down low upon his neck. His lips, beneath a straggling white mustache, trembled feebly. Upon the bridge of his eagle nose rested a large pair of spectacles through which his pale eyes peered uncertainly. The sleeves of his shirt were rolled up to his elbows and a leathern apron, battered and discolored, showed very little of his butcher-blue trousers, which ended at his ankles, bare above his dirty sabots. The strokes of his hammer, as he knocked the nails he took from his toothless mouth into the sole of the boot, were weak. One in three missed the nail and the hammer came down upon his fingers. And as he worked the tears trickled down his high cheek-bones and sunken cheeks, and he kept up a muttering, half-prayerful, half-irritable, wholly impotent.

The sun was setting upon an exquisite September day. Its red glow came in through the little window and fell gently upon the pathetic figure, upon the whitewashed walls of the room and its bare, clean floor. In the shade of the room, five feet from the bench and three from the wall, stood a low, wooden bed, with posts. At the other side of the window a low door stood half-open, and opposite the bed, in an angle of the room, was a short

flight of stairs leading to the two bedrooms above. Its door opened into the room and was hooked back to the wall, which was broken here and there and showed lath and plaster.

A sudden bugle call rang out.

The old man raised his hammer with a gesture of passionate anger.

"Curse you!" he cried, "curse you! Thieves! Robbers! Cowards! Prussians! . . . Why am I too old, *bon Dieu*? Why am I too old? Why do I live to mend boots when my son bleeds for his country? Why am I allowed to linger about, peeling potatoes and carrying water, while our enemies burn our houses and murder our children? . . . Too old to fight—too old! Oh, *bon Dieu*, *bon Dieu*!"

He gave a shrill yell and his hammer fell feebly upon the boot. With an irritability intensely pathetic he flung the boot and the hammer away from him, buried his face in his hands and swayed himself backward and forward, weeping with rage and sorrow.

"Gran'father! Gran'father!"

The voice was merry, high-pitched and excited. The door was flung back and a hatless boy of eight, in ragged blouse and muddy sabots, dashed in and seized the old man's arm.

"Ah, ha! my little one," said the old man, a look of great affection and pride coming into his eyes. "Ah, ha! my *Désiré*!"

"Oh, gran'father, come quick!"

The child pulled the old man to his feet. "What is it, my brave one? What is it?"

"Soldiers! soldiers!" cried the boy, tugging the old man to the door. "Look! look!"

With sudden eagerness old Coquesne tottered out and looked back into the village. "Our soldiers? *Mon Dieu*, perhaps they have come, perhaps— But no, Prussians, always Prussians." He threw up his clenched hands and crept back to his chair.

Désiré danced for joy on the step. "Oh, gran'father," he cried, with a thrill of excitement in his clear, piping voice, "aren't they fine, aren't they

grand? And, oh, gran'father, their horses! And look at their helmets; they shine like gold. Hans's helmet shines like gold, too. Are they Prussians like Hans?"

He noticed that the old man had returned to his chair, and for a moment he stood looking at him with a comically solemn reproachfulness. "Don't you like the soldiers, gran'father?" A sob came from the old cobbler, and the boy, with a sudden childish tenderness, ran to his side and flung his arms round the old man's neck.

Gran'father Coquesne held the boy in a passionate embrace and laid his white head upon the slight shoulder. "My little one, my little one!"

"Gran'father?" There was a suggestion of fright in the young voice.

"I am too old, and useless, and worn out. Just when I should be strong and full of fire I am no more use than a little one—no more use than you."

Tears sprang into *Désiré*'s eyes. "I—I don't want to cry, gran'father, but if you hold me so tight, I—"

The cobbler let him loose and kissed his hands and face tenderly. "Ah, but I am sorry! Did gran'father hold him so tight? Ah, but gran'father loves his son's little son, my dearie, my dearie!" He patted the child in a kind of sing-song.

The shadow faded from the boy's face. Some of his excitement returned and he tried to pull himself away. "Gran'father, what do you think I've been doing? What do you think?"

"Ah, ha!" chuckled the old man.

"But we take after our father. Mischievous, as usual!"

"No, gran'father, only something that made Hans laugh. Gran'father," he whispered in a confidential way, "I was coming back from Mother Ducane's, where I left the boots—"

"Ah, ha!" encouraged Coquesne, as the boy stopped for breath.

"I didn't stop to talk to anybody, because you told me not to—"

"Good, good."

"Only to a cat that was bleeding from its leg."

"Those devils!"

"And as I came round the corner by the forge—why is nobody there now, gran'father? No fire, no sparks?"

"Lebœuf and his sons are better employed," cried the old man exultantly.

"Oh, well, as I came round the corner, who should I see but mama——"

"Your mother?"

"With——" The boy stopped and looked laughingly up into the old man's face. "Guess!"

"I cannot guess, dearie! Tell me. I thought your mother was upstairs, weeping."

"With Hans, gran'father."

"Hans?" cried the old man, startled and incredulous. "Hans Dorf?"

"Yes, gran'father. Hans, my dear Hans!"

The old man clutched the boy's shoulders and a sudden hoarseness came into his voice. "Where were they? Go on!"

"They were walking arm in arm by the river, and Hans's spurs jingled whenever he walked over a stone. I wish I had spurs, gran'father."

"Arm in arm?" The old man looked at the boy with horror in his eyes.

"Yes, gran'father, and I believe mama likes Hans as much as I do. This is the third time I've seen them out walking. I threw a small stone at Hans and he laughed as it hit his helmet. No wonder mama likes Hans. He gives me sweets."

Gran'father Coquesne rose up and pushed the child away. His face was contorted with anger. "Arm in arm with a soldier of the country her husband is fighting!" he muttered. "It's bad enough to be forced to feed this Prussian beast, but for my son's wife to make a friend of him—perhaps even——"

A woman's laugh drifted through the broken window. A man's deeper tones joined in.

"Désiré, I think I hear more soldiers coming. Run upstairs, my little one, and look out of the window. You will see better. Quick, then, quick."

"Oh, gran'father, how jolly!" The boy ran like the wind.

The old man followed him to the stairs. "But be careful, Désiré; do not lean out too far," he called.

The boy clattered up and could be heard crossing the room above. With an expression of fierce hatred and disgust the old man unhooked the door, almost closed it upon himself, and stood peering into the room from the lower stair.

Marie Coquesne pressed her pretty face close against the window for an instant and then stood in a coquettish attitude in the doorway. A big, good-looking Prussian touched her cheek with his finger.

"Don't, Monsieur Hans," said Marie; "someone may see."

"What do I care?" replied Hans, following her into the room and catching hold of her elbows. "Besides, there's no one to see. That's the best of being on the outskirts of the town—ha?"

Marie laughed—a bright, excited ripple. "You were in luck being billeted here, eh, m'sieur?"

"Was I? That remains to be seen."

The old man peered into the room. His face was white and his eyes gleamed fiercely.

"Indeed! How?" asked Marie, struggling slightly.

Hans laughed. "I do not yet know, little sweetheart, how kind you are going to be!"

"Then I have not been kind?"

"Ah, yes, you have been kind—true. But not so kind as I should like."

She looked into his face and made a move. "Are all Prussians so greedy?"

"I am greedy. Give me one more kiss."

"Will that satisfy m'sieur?"

"Yes." The Prussian tilted up her face and kissed it. "No. Another, and another, and another"—he kissed her each time—"and then I am not satisfied."

The old man stamped on the stairs, pretending to come down, and then pushed back the door. Beads of perspiration stood on his forehead and the veins on his temples beat hard.

Marie flung the Prussian's arms away and ran quickly to the table. Hans turned angrily.

"Ah, ha, my father," said Marie.

The old man made an effort to control his voice. "Ah, ha, my daughter!" he replied.

"Ah, ha, m'sieur!" Hans growled.

"It is a fine evening," the old man went on, going close to the Prussian in an oily, deferential manner, "and your soldiers arrive every moment."

"Oh!" said the Prussian rudely; "they do, do they?"

"When are we to lose you, my good friend?"

"Perhaps the end of the week; perhaps not. It doesn't affect you. There are quite enough of us in action to knock over your sorry fellows. They're a feeble, thin-livered lot, old man—poor fighting men, but good runners." He turned away and went toward Marie.

The old man lifted his arms to strike him, with an exclamation of hatred, and then altered his tone to one of banter. "Ah, you think so, m'sieur?"

"Sssh!" said Marie to the Prussian. She had seen the gesture.

"Sssh be hanged!" said the Prussian roughly. "What do I care for this interrupting old dotard! . . . Yes, old man, I do think so. And so will you, in a few short weeks, when our ring is complete and we have your Emperor and his army trapped like rats."

"We shall see, my soldier, we shall see!" replied the old man, trying to bring an easy smile to a mouth made hard with pain. He went over to his bench and shakily lighted a candle-end which stood in its own grease.

"Sst, quick!" said Hans, bending over Marie. "Another."

The woman evaded him deftly, darting a look at the cobbler. "Not now. Presently."

"But when?"

"When he and the boy are in bed."

Hans looked at her eagerly. "You will come to me?" The old man crept nearer, straining his ears. "You will slip down here?"

Marie put her finger on her lips and laughed softly. "Perhaps," she whispered. "But Désiré? Where is he, my father? Surely he is not out still?"

Hans turned away, rubbing his hands and smiling.

"No, no," said the cobbler, hardly able to speak. "He is upstairs. Listen; at this moment he comes down again."

The boy clattered down the bare stairs, calling, "Hans! Where is Hans?"

"Hello, little one!"

Désiré ran to him and jumped on his knee. "I have eaten those sweets you gave me, Hans. I have had no sweets before for a long time, Hans!"

"So, youngster!"

"They were nice—very."

Gran'father Coquesne bore the sight of his son's son on the knee of his enemy as long as he could. Then he shambled forward, with an oily smile, and put his hands on the child's shoulders. "But it is very kind of m'sieur to give the boy some sweets."

"Ah, yes, very kind," echoed Marie.

"Go away, old man."

"I like sweets," said Désiré.

Hans allowed himself a slight leer at the boy's mother. "And I, ha!"

The old man took the child away from the Prussian quickly. "But he is too heavy to nurse, eh, M'sieur Hans? He is growing into a little man now."

The Prussian rose, annoyed. "And I don't think he'll ever be called upon to fight us when he is one. If I know anything, his father will have had enough to last for a good bit." He swaggered to the door.

"Oh, Hans, don't go!" cried the boy.

"What? Oh, I'm going to smoke on the step till supper."

"It will not be long, m'sieur. I will go and get ready to cook it," said Marie.

"So?" replied Hans, smiling at her.

"Good, good. I shall be ready."

Marie nodded to him and ran upstairs.

"Wait for me, Hans. I will come, too."

"No, no, Désiré," whispered the old man, clutching his arm. "I do not wish——"

"But, gran'father," whimpered the child, struggling, "I want to go."

"Ah, dearie, but gran'father would have you stay with him."

"Yes, but why mayn't I go?"

"What!" cried the old man; "you love this Hans better than your gran'father?"

"Oh, gran'father!" With an infinitely tender smile the boy clasped his arms round the old man's knees.

"Then stay with me, dearie. See, I want you to help me play a funny joke upon your good friend Hans, that will amuse him. Will you, little one?"

"Oh, yes, gran'father."

The old man, with a gleam of cunning in his eyes, patted the boy's shoulder with a chuckle.

"Then bring me my hammer from the bench, and that large staple of iron you will see by its side."

The boy brought them back eagerly. "I've got them, gran'father. What are you going to do? Tell Désiré!"

"All in good time, my little one, all in good time. But it will be great fun—oh, great fun! He will enjoy it, your friend Hans. Ha! ha! What a joke! What a joke! . . . Now fetch the candle from my bench, and bring it quickly to me by Hans's bed."

"The candle? Yes." The boy darted away.

"But quietly, boy, quietly. We must be mice." He shuffled as he spoke to the space on the farther side of the bed, and with the air of a man almost delirious began hammering the staple into the beam in the wall, on a level with the pillow.

Désiré held the candle close to the wall, trembling with pleasure. "But tell me, gran'father, tell me."

"See, we first drive in the staple so—and so—and so——"

"Yes, yes."

"And then, the staple well and firmly in the wood, you give me the candle to hold."

"Here," said the boy, thrusting the

piece of candle into the old man's hands.

The flame flickered in the old cobbler's unsteady grasp. "And then," he said, almost gaily, "you run—but quietly—to that coil of rope that is hanging to the nail yonder."

"I see it," said the boy.

"You then bring it to me; take the candle again——"

"I've got it, gran'father."

"And then," continued the old man, putting the hammer on the bed, "we tie a great, strong knot through the staple so—and so."

"Go on, go on!" laughed the child, jumping about in his excitement.

"What then, my brave boy, what then? Why then, just to tease your good friend Hans and make him laugh, we put the rope loosely over his pillow, leaving a large loop here, so."

"Yes, yes, gran'father."

"And we then let the rest of the rope hang down in the shadow—so—and there it is, ready for use." He laughed, rubbing his hands gloatingly.

"But is that all, gran'father? That won't make Hans laugh."

"No, my little one, that is only the beginning. The rest of the joke must wait until your good friend Hans goes to bed. Oh, it will be good fun! How your good friend Hans—who so kindly gave you sweets—will enjoy it! You see that coil on the pillow? When he is in bed, asleep—I shall take care that he sleeps soundly—you will creep up and you will very carefully put the rope round his neck, my little one."

"Round his neck?"

"Yes, my little one, yes. What fun! What fun! And then you and I will catch hold of the rope and we will wind it tight on my winch."

"Gran'father! It will hurt him."

"Oh, no, no, it will not hurt. It is only in fun—just a game to tease him—and then we will let go, and see what your good friend Hans will say. Oh, it's a good game, a merry game."

The boy still looked doubtful. "Will he like it?"

Gran'father Coquesne chuckled. "He is a merry fellow, your friend Hans."

He will sit up and see us and burst out laughing: 'Ah, ha!' he will say, 'so it is you, youngster, and the old man, playing tricks. Ha, ha! Good. Very funny. You shall have some more sweets!'"

The boy's face lit up. "And he will give me more sweets?"

"Certainly, my little one, certainly."

"Oh, how nice! But, gran'father, mother will send me to bed."

"No," chuckled the old man, with the gleam of cunning again in his eyes. "I have thought of that. I will need you to hold the candle while I finish the boot. But not a word, dearie. You understand?"

"Oh, yes, gran'father. That would spoil everything."

The old man laughed. "It would, dearie, it would indeed. You will be a little mouse."

The child clasped his hands, leaped up and kissed his grandfather, turned to the door and ran toward it gaily.

The old man waited for the door to open and close. Then, with a little cry of senile excitement, he flung his arms up. "Too old to fight—yes! But not yet too old to save the honor of my name and account for one, at least, of the enemies of my country."

II

MARIE came down stairs singing.

The old man pounced upon the hammer, hurriedly took the candle from the bed, and put it back on the bench. In cap and apron Marie entered, crossed the room lightly to the fireplace, and still singing, lifted the lids of the pots, stirring and tasting.

The old man watched her with a look of supreme disgust and contempt. "My daughter is merry tonight," he said cringingly.

"It is time, father. *Mon Dieu!* but we have been dull enough since the war, in all conscience."

The old man peered at her with a queer, sneering expression. "You are merry because you have a feeling that your husband is safe and unhurt?"

"Hey? Oh, Jacques is all right. He'll take care of himself, never fear."

"Ah, but how glad he will be to come back to his little house, and his child and his old father—and his faithful wife!"

Marie dropped a lid from the stove with a clatter. "Oh!" she cried petulantly, "don't keep talking to me when I'm busy. You only make me upset things."

"Ah, but I am sorry, my child. It is good to chat with you once again. For the past few days you have been so busy I have but seldom seen you."

"Well," said Marie shortly, "I've been in all the time, as usual, cooking and scrubbing—always cooking and scrubbing."

"I am not grumbling, my daughter. These are dreadful times, and our poor country bleeds itself to death. It is good to hear you sing again; even I am happier tonight, although I am too old to fight." He chuckled and murmured under his breath, "What fun! What fun!"

"The soup is steaming, father."

"I will light the lamp, my daughter," said the old man, shuffling to the table. "Our friend the enemy is hungry."

"M'sieur Hans! M'sieur Hans!" called Marie, turning the soup into the four plates.

"He is talking to the little one; I will call him."

Going to the door, the old man stood for a moment looking at the stout young Prussian. A glint of fiendish joy was in his eyes. "M'sieur Hans," he said, with an air of great cordiality, "supper, my friend."

The Prussian swung the boy on his shoulder. "About time, too. It's half an hour late tonight, as it is. We're more than hungry—not so, youngster?"

"I am always hungry now, Hans. Mother, mother! Look at me!"

"Hungry or not," said Hans, putting the boy down, "he's heavy. What a pity he's not old enough to fight, eh, old man? Who knows—he might have put me away, hey?"

"Oh, Hans, I wouldn't shoot you!"

With a little cry he couldn't suppress, the cobbler dropped a spoon upon the table. He instantly turned it into a quavering laugh.

"Marie," broke in the old man, with feeble jocularly, "we will give our good friend here a treat. Shall we, Marie?"

"Meaning me, old man?"

"Yes, yes," cried Désiré.

"How, father?"

"I have one bottle of the excellent spirits which Jacques won at the regatta last year. Good, warm spirits, M'sieur Hans. You have been kind to the little one; you shall have it. Yes, but you shall."

"Sssh!"

A sound of galloping horses drifted in through the window.

"Poor devils," said Hans, "they're making a night of it. They'd envy me if they only knew—hey?" He looked at Marie and laughed uproariously.

"But yes, M'sieur Hans," piped the old man, placing the bottle upon the table, having carefully drawn the cork. "Although the fare is poor here we mean well. A glass, my daughter, a glass."

"Brandy, by Bismarck! A glass, my daughter, a glass." He gave an insolent imitation of the old man's treble. "Old man, you're my friend for life."

"I hope so, m'sieur, I hope so."

"This is the first brandy I shall have put in my stomach since we entered your cursed country. This is luck. A glass now, quick."

"M'sieur is dry," said Marie, handing one.

"M'sieur is always dry, my dear. Go on, old man, raise the elbow. Brandy is an old friend of mine."

"Water, M'sieur Hans?" asked Marie.

"No, no!" cried the old man.

"Water? Get out," scoffed the Prussian. "I never play tricks with a friend." He raised the glass to Marie. "*Hoch!*" he said, and drank with enormous relish. "Ah, but that's the stuff. Why, father, it's as old as you are. How old are you? A hundred?"

The cobbler winced. "A good joke, hey, Désiré?" he said, filling the soldier's glass again and looking at him queerly. "A good joke. How our good friend m'sieur loves his jokes."

"So do we, gran'father." The boy turned to the Prussian, as though about to blurt out the old man's plans.

"Finish the soup, dearie," said the grandfather, touching him on the arm quickly. "It will get cold."

The boy caught the meaning look and laughed uproariously. "Oh, gran'father, what a joke!"

"Why, father," said Marie, "you haven't touched your plate."

"No, no," said the old man, fidgeting about the Prussian's chair, "there are others who need it more than I. I am too old. I do not count. If M'sieur Hans—"

"Try M'sieur Hans," said the soldier, reaching out.

"Mine is all gone, too," said Désiré pathetically.

Hans stopped drinking the soup. "Share this, my youngster. I never expected it."

"No, no," cried grandfather. "M'sieur is too kind."

Hans shook off the feeble hand. "Come on, youngster," he said.

"Here you are." He poured half the soup into the child's plate, and turned to his glass to find it filled again.

"What! more? I wish all my hosts were like you, old man." He drank it at a draught, and put the glass down empty with a bang.

"Isn't Hans thirsty?" cried the boy.

The old man began stroking the Prussian's sleeve. "Ah, M'sieur Hans, it would have pleased me to have given you a bottle of this every day you are with us."

"Not half so much as it would have pleased me," retorted Hans; and then he broke out into a German song, and beat time on the table with a spoon. Gran'father Coquesne watched him with a growing smile; his fingers twitched convulsively, like the mouth of a cat before it springs upon an unconscious bird.

Marie drew the old man angrily

aside. "Father," she whispered emphatically, "take the bottle away. He will make himself drunk."

"Tush, my child. Prussians cannot get drunk. They have no heads."

"But he is already tipsy."

The old man chuckled. "No, no," he said; "merry, my daughter, only merry."

"Well," said Marie, with a bright spot of anger on each cheek, "I warn you! If you let him finish the bottle I shall be very angry."

The old man broke into a kind of whine. "My Marie couldn't be angry with her poor old father. He means well, he means well."

Marie swung round on her heel, with her head in the air. "Come, Désiré. We will go to bed!"

"Spare the child to me for ten minutes," broke in the old man. "I need his help with a job that must be finished by the morning."

Hans staggered to his feet. "You're not going, sweetheart?"

"Sst! Quiet, stupid!"

"Oh—ah—yes," whispered Hans. "I understand, I understand. Mum's the word. You'll come—mind!"

"Yes, I'll come," Marie went up to the staircase. "Good night, father."

The grandfather had watched and listened eagerly. He stood with twitching fingers, looking sideways at the rope. "God's blessing, my daughter," he cried cordially.

"Good night, M'sieur Hans."

Hans waved his hand. "God's blessing, my daughter," he chuckled.

"Send Désiré soon, father."

"Yes, yes, Marie. A little while. A few short minutes."

The woman's steps echoed through the cottage. Then a door closed.

Désiré, bubbling with pleasure and excitement, made a little run for his grandfather. "Oh, what a joke!" he cried.

"Quietly, my little one, quietly."

"Hans, you must go to bed now."

"What's that, hey! Bed? All in good time, all in good time. Finish old man's bottle first." He drank

again, and the glass fell on the floor. Hans kicked it into a corner, and sat on the edge of the table. "Here, old 'un," he shouted, "take off my boots."

Désiré ran forward. "Let me, Hans; I know the way."

"You one, boy. Old 'un t'other. Here, old 'un."

"But yes, my good friend, instantly." The old man, with a twitch of pain, bent over the thrust-out leg. "They are good boots indeed," he said.

"They're Prussian boots. All good things come from Prussia. No French work for me. These boots never run away."

A rush of blood flooded the old man's face and neck, and a snarl of rage gurgled in his throat. But with a superhuman effort he mastered himself. "M'sieur is right," he said. "M'sieur is always right."

Désiré clapped his hands. "Now, Hans, go to bed."

In a stupid kind of way Hans looked from the old man to the child.

"Hello," he said, with a cunning smile, "you seem devilish anxious for me to go to bed. Washup, hey?"

"Nothing, Hans, nothing," laughed the boy wildly.

Hans lurched across the room toward the bed. "Shouldn't be bit surprised if youngster hasn't made me apple-pie, hey? Oh, I know these youngsters. Was youngster myself once. Hey?"

The old man shuffled quietly in front of him. "The bottle, m'sieur, the bottle. A sin to waste the rest."

Hans stopped and turned around. The old man breathed less heavily.

"No intention of wasting, old 'un. Fill my glass. Ho! no glass? Alri',

drink out of bottle. Ho! ho! Not first time, hey?"

He lifted the bottle to his lips and drank. Then, finding it empty, he flung it with a roar of laughter at the old man. It missed his head by an inch, and fell with a thud against the soft wall.

"Bad shot, my son," laughed the old man.

"Not so much of that 'son,' old man."

Praise God, there's nothing French about me." He yawned. "I say, but I'm sleepy. This brandy has gone to my head, and no mistake. Better snatch forty winks until she—" He pulled himself up and turned blusteringly. "Here, you, get to your beds. Can't have any hammering here to keep me awake." He lurched over to his bed, pitching his tunic on the foot of it.

"Gran'father," cried Désiré, "he's going, he's going!"

"Quiet, little one, quiet." The old man caught the child's eager hand. "We must be mice. . . . No, no, friend Hans, no hammering tonight. You will sleep well tonight, my Prussian, very well. . . . What a joke, hey, little one, what a joke!"

The Prussian, breathing heavily, growled. Désiré tugged eagerly at the old man's hand, pulling him to the table. Even more excited than the boy, the old cobbler blew out the lamp. A long shaft of moonlight streamed in through the window and fell upon the staircase.

Marie opened her door and called, "Désiré, Désiré!"

"Coming, my daughter, coming." He led the boy to the bed, and peered at the snoring soldier, touching him here and there to test the soundness of his sleep. "Hans," he cried, bending low, "Hans, my friend, there is still a drop of the brandy in the bottom of the bottle. . . . No, he sleeps. What a joke, what a joke! Now, little one, the noose. Quietly—we are mice. Over head and round neck, so! Ha!"

The boy stood on tiptoe and slipped the rope over the Prussian's head, lifting it with an effort to do so. A growl was the only result.

"It's round, gran'father. Pull, pull!"

Marie came to the bottom of the stairs and stood, annoyed to find the old man and the boy still up. She was about to call when she saw Gran'father Coquesne slip the rope round the winch and with a feeble yell of triumph wind it madly. Then,

with her hands held convulsively to her mouth to press back a shriek of horror, she heard her lover give a great gurgle, saw his hand drawn against the post of the bed and his legs kick spasmodically.

"Oh, gran'father," cried the boy, clapping his hands, "what a joke! what a joke! Look at his legs! Look at Hans's legs!"

The old man laughed deliriously, and then flung up his hand in salute, with an almost superb gesture. "For the honor of my country and my son!" he cried, and crossed himself. And then, breaking into feverish laughter again, he shuffled his feet about in a kind of dance.

"You've hurt him, gran'father!" cried the child fearfully.

"Ah! ha! What a joke! Your good friend Hans, he likes a joke. Ho! ho!"

"But, gran'father, he does not sit up and say, 'Ah, ha! You are clever, you are funny!'"

The old man shuffled across to the bed and touched the twitching body. "Not tonight, my dearie. He is too tired. He sleeps well."

"Oh, gran'father," whimpered the boy, "but where is the joke?"

The old man stifled a chuckle, and turned the boy away from the bed to prevent his catching sight of the staring, glazed eyes, the bulging lips of the strangled man. "But you shall have your sweets, my little one. Oh, yes, you shall have them, never fear. Run to bed now, and pray for your father—your father whose good name is saved!"

As he bent down to kiss the child's cheeks the woman tottered forward and went behind the door.

"Good night, dear gran'father."

"Good night, my little one, good night. The holy Virgin and all the angels guard your rest."

He waited in the middle of the room until the boy's step reached the top stair and he heard the door above open. Then, exultantly, he made his way to the bed, and began to untie the rope round the neck of the dead Prussian.

"Now, now, old man, aged a hundred, you who are too old to fight—we shall see. You may be too old, old man, but you have satisfactorily accounted for one of your country's enemies. Ah, ha! . . . Rope under the arms, tight, so—and now, with all your strength——"

He pulled at the heavy body. It fell off the low bed upon the floor with a thud.

"And now, to the river—to the

river. What a joke, what a joke! Ha! ha! ha! ha!"

Chuckling like a child, and pulling like a maniac, the old man got the body to the door of the cottage. Opening the door he pulled the body out, and shut it. The latch fell with a snap. The Last Post sang through the air from the village. The woman fell flat upon her face in the shaft of moonlight. A faint chuckling drifted in through the broken window.



A LOVE LETTER

DEAR ADELINE: Your grace hath lent
To life new charm. Of old, I bent
Above a dark and toilsome way
With empty heart. By naught made gay,
When Duty becked, in grief I went.

And then—you came! The clouds were rent;
The roses bloomed with rarer scent
Beneath your smile. The world was May,
Dear Adeline.

But one thing lacks. To crown content,
Defer no more the glad event.
Come, sweetheart, name the happy day.
When next you write, a postscript, pray—
A word or two to give consent,
Dear, add a line!

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.



ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT

LOTTIE G.—A pretty gift for a friend starting on an ocean voyage is a motto to hang in his steamer state-room. It will prove a pleasing reminder of you and your kind thoughtfulness. Work the motto on perforated cardboard with red and brown worsted. Then frame it in a black walnut "rustic" frame. An appropriate motto to select for this purpose is:

YOU CANNOT EAT YOUR CAKE AND HAVE IT, TOO.

CAROLYN WELLS.

THE PHILOSOPHERS OF THE GO-CART

By Geraldine Anthony

I SAID to Amy: "I have come to the lamentable conclusion that it costs more—*much* more—to live in our own hut in the country than to exist in a flat in the city. I fear our long dream of rural felicity is o'er."

"I knew from the look of your hair that you had been doing accounts," said my friend sadly, "but don't for mercy's sake ask me to go over them."

"Here it is twelve o'clock," I pursued, "and the breakfast dishes are still on the table, garnished with flies of assorted sizes. The beds are not made, and unless you have groomed Paul—which I doubt—he is still covered with yesterday's mud."

"Oh, yes, poor Paul! I will take the broom and sweep him off at once," cried Amy, jumping to her feet.

"Not until you have helped me to dispose of this mess, I beg," I interposed hastily.

"Why haven't we a pig?" sighed Amy, surveying the table. "I would gladly pick up the cloth by the corners and sling the whole business into the pen, dishes and all."

"It seems to me that our only cause for thanksgiving is that our live stock is limited to Paul," I replied with acrimony. "As it is, we are little but burnt offerings to a calico pony. Had it not been for the ill-judged loan of Paul, we should never have taken a house in the country, Maria would not have left us on account of the loneliness, and we should be spared the embarrassment of facing the butcher and the vegetable man in person."

"I can't think how it is that we owe them so much money," said Amy. "I'm sure we never have anything de-

cent to eat. Why does it cost us so much more to live than it did in the apartment?"

"Well, for one thing, people were always asking us out to luncheon and dinner," said I. "Halcyon days! I didn't half appreciate them until I had subsisted for four months upon freshly killed veal and pounded steak, cooked over a wood stove. Really, I'm surprised that Maria stood that stove so long."

"She kept thinking we would go back," said Amy, "and when that hope failed she departed. If it were not for Paul, I'd turn the key in the door and follow her. Oh, why did we long to be pastoral, when we might be sitting in Delmonico's window at this moment, looking out at the beautiful pavements and ordering lobster à la Newburg, and *filet mignon*, with pistache ice-cream to top off with? I'm a cockney, and I'm proud of it, and I consider this the most diabolical vacation I have ever had. Why, it will take us the rest of our natural lives to recover from it."

"But we have had Paul," said I, "and as we have him still, we must continue to bear it until our six months' lease expires—or we do. Besides, if we go, we must pay that wretched butcher, and that will leave us nothing to go with."

"And if we stay, we must get another Maria. I am going to town."

"Not without me."

"Someone must stay here to take care of Paul."

"A husband and six children would be less care to us than that blessed beast," I groaned. "Not content with

burying us in the country, he requires our constant society. We haven't read, we haven't made over our clothes, we haven't practiced, all on account of Paul; and fondly as I love him, I begin to feel that your Uncle John might have been in better business than lending him to us."

Amy sighed, and began to remove the breakfast dishes with the tips of her reluctant fingers. I looked sadly at the corner where my guitar and her violin reposed in their cases. I always feel musically inclined when I have no time to practice.

It was very hot. The locusts were shrilling in the dusty trees, and an idiotic hen set up a cackling in my nasturtium bed. In a corner of the kitchen stood a great basket of unironed clothes, left by the deserter, Maria, and under the shed reposed our one vehicle, splashed with the mud of yesterday's thunderstorm. The boy who "chored" for us had forgotten to wash it, as usual. I went to visit Paul, who, though busily engaged in crib-biting, received me cordially, nosed my pocket for sugar, browsed my hair in a playful fashion, and didn't object when I swept him off with the broom. Paul was an animal of parts. His only vice was running away, which he did on the slightest provocation, but we didn't mind that. In fact, it was the sole excitement we had. It was while I was brushing out his beautiful flowing tail that my great idea began to take shape in my mind, but I developed it in silence, not knowing how it would strike my partner in domestic misery. I went back and took a lengthened survey of our runabout. I found that, besides a space in the rear there was room for a goodly box under the seat. Then I dragged my weary members back to the house, and lighted a fire in the wood stove.

"What are you going to do?" asked Amy. "We don't want any luncheon. I have just finished these dishes, and hereafter I shall eat no more, for not even the pangs of hunger will induce me to wash them again."

"I am going to iron these clothes

and put them into our trunks," said I. "I feel that we need a vacation."

"We do indeed," she agreed, "but how are we to escape from our present holiday?"

"We will close the house," said I, "pay the butcher, express our heavy baggage to my sister at Pensico; then, having scarcely any money left to tide us over until the first of October, we will harness our good steed to the go-cart, with as little luggage as possible, and take to the road."

"And sing for our supper, like little Tommy Tucker?" Amy demanded.

"Even so. I have always longed to be a wandering minstrel. Now is my opportunity."

"Let us start at once!" cried Amy. "I already see myself captivating audiences on hotel piazzas. What shall we play? Nothing classical, of course, but popular and sentimental."

"Hold! Not so fast!" said I. "We must first have a road map and a compass. I should dislike to journey South under the impression that I was heading due North."

"I will draw you a map," said Amy, seizing a pencil and the butcher's book. "See, here is Matapan—dreadful little hole!—and here is Pensico—adorable spot!—and all we need to remember is that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points."

"Unfortunately the road-builders may not have seen the necessity of direct communication between Matapan and Pensico, and I doubt if Paul's accomplishments include flying."

"I wouldn't throw cold water on my own plan," said Amy severely. "Get a map if you choose to squander money in that way when you have an English tongue in your head."

"It might be as well to find out where the hotels are," I suggested meekly.

"There is something in that," Amy admitted. "Why do you fuss with those things? I'm going to practice."

II

We had intended to start on Thursday, but Wednesday proved such a

fine day that we were unwilling to wait, and the expressman chanced to come early, which seemed like a gentle hint from Fate; so we hastily harnessed Paul, packed the runabout and turned the key in the door.

"We can mail it to the landlord if we don't have to come back before our lease expires," I said, dropping it into my pocket. Amy picked up the reins and clucked to Paul, who had marigolds thrust into his head-band, and pranced skittishly. We bumped over a "thank-you-marm" and at length found ourselves upon the high-road.

I leaned back and shook my fist at our deserted house, standing smug and respectable among its dusty verdure. In my triumph I warbled, "Good-bye forever, good-bye, good-bye!" But Amy, who is superstitious, stopped me by the dreadful suggestion that Paul would cast a shoe in the next mile, and that an ignominious return would be our guerdon for thus challenging Fate.

We were now on the eastern boundary of New York State, but our first morning's journey took us over the Connecticut line, and as soon as we felt that Paul had really shaken the dust of Matapan from his hoofs we drew up under the roadside shade, and ate our luncheon, while our pampered steed rested and grazed near us.

"We must have come about fifteen miles," said Amy, devouring her third sandwich. "Here comes a farmer with an ox-team. I'll hold Paul, while you ask him how far it is to Matapan."

"Matapan? Oh, about six mile," said the farmer reflectively.

"Only six miles! Then what did that signpost mean? Aren't we in Connecticut?"

"Yes, but you ain't very far in," said our friend.

"Goodness, we ought to be getting along then," said I, "or at this rate we shall spend the night on the road."

We had not driven more than fifteen minutes before we came to a stream that made a loop beside the

road, and as we were watering Paul there another countryman drove his horse into the ford beside us.

"How far are we from Matapan?" I asked.

"Wal, it may be about eighteen mile from here," he said.

"There, now!" said Amy. "I knew that first man was wrong."

After we had driven for another hour, in the hottest part of the afternoon, we met an old man in overalls riding a bicycle.

"How far is it to Matapan?" we inquired of him.

"Seven miles," he called back at us.

Amy and I looked at each other aghast. According to the sun and the road map we had been going steadily eastward, yet we seemed to be almost nearer Matapan than we were when we started.

"I have it!" I said presently. "Each man told us the distance from his own house to Matapan, no matter how far away from it he may be." It was a forlorn hope of a theory, but it cheered us mightily, and we afterward found it to be quite correct. At all events we drove into Walford, our settled destination, at about six o'clock, and then we knew that we must have come twenty-two miles since morning.

Walford had a village street, with wide stretches of turf between the road and the sidewalk, and double rows of stately elms arching over them like cloisters. There was a little hotel setting fairly on the street, with a narrow white piazza where summer boarders were rocking and waiting for their tea.

"This looks nice and cheap," said Amy, "but so do the boarders. I doubt whether our efforts bring us in any munificent sum here."

"We might ask the proprietor to deduct something from our bill, because we are willing to entertain his guests," I suggested.

The proprietor proved to be a woman with large diamonds in her ears. She did not look as though she were in the habit of deducting anything, but

she said we might perform in the parlor after tea, as the boarders generally sat outside, and they could go in or stay out, just as they pleased. We pinned up a notice which we had prepared to the effect that "Miss Gray and Miss Vanderveer would give a musical and dramatic entertainment in the parlor at half-past eight," and, as we came out from supper, we could see the boarders reading it. When we climbed to our small room under the eaves to put on the other gowns, which we had brought in the box under the seat, we clutched each other in a sudden panic.

"I played two solos in the big ball-room at the Waldorf," said Amy defiantly.

"We have always plumed ourselves on being philosophical," I said, as we hooked and pinned each other with shaking hands. Our faces looked white and scared in the little flawy mirror, in which our reflections seemed cut on the bias.

"It's our own fault," said Amy. "Nobody asked us to make a show of ourselves. Come along." And we marched into the parlor with the violin and guitar, like martyrs on their way to the stake.

There were two old ladies already in the parlor when we began to tune our instruments, and some children came in and stared at us. Then the proprietress appeared with a thin woman in tow. We struck up a coon song, and several more people straggled in. All told, our audience numbered about fifteen women and ten children. They seemed very near to us and terribly lacking in enthusiasm, though, when I recited "Little Orphant Annie" the proprietress said it was "real cute." We were growing desperate at the chill of the atmosphere. "You'll have to give them the menagerie," Amy whispered to me.

The menagerie is my *pièce de résistance*, but it is neither a dignified nor a becoming performance; up to that time it had been reserved for my intimate friends. However, I agreed with Amy that something must be done to thaw this coldly critical atmosphere, so I

swallowed such little pride as by this time remained to me and roared and wriggled, gibbered and pranced, to the obvious delight of the juvenile portion of the audience. Seeing the rapture of their offspring, the mothers also unbent so far as to giggle, and for the first time we received a genuine round of applause, and I was obliged to encore my dreadful "turn," feeling thankful that no one I knew was present to see what an idiot I was making of myself.

"After that, you must pass around the hat," I said sternly to Amy, and she went about the room with a scarlet countenance and a pasteboard box, which was our contribution plate. The audience began to melt away as soon as it realized that a collection was being taken. Our box receipts, on that first evening, amounted to seventy-two cents, twenty-five of which were contributed by the proprietress.

"If it's all like this I shall have to write to Uncle John," said Amy gloomily.

"Do you wish you were back in Matapan?" I demanded severely. "I don't. I suppose George has been sitting on the doorstep all the evening. If I had realized that his sister's place was within easy bicycling distance of us, I should never have taken that house at all."

"And what do you think of me, without even a George to refuse every Sunday afternoon?" she demanded.

Our mattress was about the thickness and consistency of a buckwheat cake; the pillows were like caramels. There was a paper shade in our one window which we were obliged to pin up to let the air in, and a big June-bug was bobbing about the low ceiling. I realized that Amy was crying. We forgot that we were philosophers. I felt for her hand in the dark, and we both felt for our handkerchiefs.

"You would have had a much better time this summer if you had only stayed at your Uncle John's," I said remorsefully. "I shouldn't have persuaded you to come with me."

"You didn't persuade me. I couldn't

stay at Uncle John's. I never told you, but there was a man—oh, dear!"

"What did he do?"

"It wasn't he—it was *they*. Just because he was disposed to like me a little—it wasn't more than that—they began to throw me at his head. You don't know what awful match-makers they are. And he couldn't help seeing it, so I just came away as fast as I could. That's all."

"Was he nice?" I asked.

"How *could* a man seem nice when you are being thrown at his head every hour in the day? Don't let's talk about it," said Amy. "His name was Willis," she said presently.

III

THE next day we drove to Gray's Falls, where we found a larger hotel and better business. A touring automobile passed us on the road with a single occupant in visored cap and goggles. "I hope he is going to the hotel," said I, with true commercial instinct. "He looks good for a dollar."

We could not tell whether he was in the parlor or not that evening, for those goggles disguise a man as effectually as the famous iron mask, but as I was going on my rounds—it had not been necessary to resort to the menagerie that evening, so it was my turn to take up the collection—a masculine hand was suddenly thrust in at the window from the piazza outside, and a five-dollar bill dropped into the hat.

I felt rather uncomfortable about that bill, but Amy said the man was probably a benevolent old thing with daughters at home, and that it was just like Uncle John, so I refrained from observing that, judging from his hand, he might be benevolent, but he certainly wasn't old.

We were off bright and early the next morning on our road to Scarboro, in much better spirits than on the previous day. So, alas, was Paul, whose skittishness was quite unaccountable. He took the bit in his teeth at the edge of the village, and ran for about a

mile; he ran again when we passed a blacksmith's shop; and just as we struck the best bit of road we had traveled so far, the "chug-chug" of an automobile sounded behind us and he decided to run again.

As I have observed before, we never worried about Paul's little habits, for he only ran for his own diversion, and whenever we came to any dangerous turning he always stopped of his own accord; but the man in the automobile didn't know this, and he was much concerned that his machine should have frightened our horse. "Keep to the right," he shouted, "and I'll stop him." And before we had time to assure him that we were in no danger, he had passed us on our left, sped ahead, stopped his machine and was standing in the road to catch Paul's head. It was a gallant rescue, so we refrained from telling him that it was unnecessary. He never took off his disfiguring goggles, hence we could not see his face, but his voice and figure seemed young. He said he would go ahead, in order not to alarm Paul again, if we would allow him a few minutes' start; so we scrubbed Paul down with bunches of fern while the automobile went chugging out of sight.

There was a big hotel at Scarboro, and there we found a married couple whom we knew. The husband was scandalized at our enterprise, and threatened to telegraph to Uncle John, but the wife thought it the best joke in the world, and if there had been another seat in the go-cart, I think she would have insisted on taking to the road with us. We were an artistic and financial success at Scarboro. Our friend insisted on passing the hat for us, and among the proceeds we found another five-dollar bill.

"I think he's a theatrical manager and wants to engage us for vaudeville," said I.

Amy was unaccountably cross and asked me whether I had written to George.

During the next two days we caught glimpses of a motor-car in the distance,

but it did not come near us again until a severe thunderstorm overtook us on the road to Middleburg. We were struggling with our mackintoshes while the water ran down our necks and into our shoes, and, as ill-luck would have it, there was not a house or a barn in sight.

"That man has a top on his automobile," I said sadly, and just then I saw it coming toward us through the downpour. He stopped his car a little way off, under a better clump of trees than ours, and invited us to get in and sit under the shelter of his canopy until the shower passed over. He tied Paul to the fence, and covered the seat of the go-cart with a waterproof sheet he had in his car. Then he came back, and for an hour we sat and talked, but he never removed his goggles.

When the sun came out again, and he had helped us to dry Paul's harness and put the cart in order, he took a few minutes' start of us once more, and we went on our way. No sooner were we fairly off than Amy, who had been most talkative and agreeable during the shower, sank into a sudden and profound gloom. "I have discovered why he doesn't take off his mask," she announced finally.

"Has he no nose?" I asked breathlessly.

"He doesn't want me to recognize him," said Amy. "He thinks I don't know him, and wild horses couldn't drag the truth from me in his presence; but from the start I have suspected it, and now I know. It is Mr. Willis."

"The man at Uncle John's?" I gasped. "Then why doesn't he own it?"

"Oh, he's really too kind-hearted to leave two unprotected females in distress, but I know he thinks that if he were to take off that mask and say, 'How do you do, Miss Gray?' I should immediately be thrown at his head again."

"Who is going to throw you? Not I," I said scornfully.

"He probably thinks me quite capable of doing it myself. If you had only seen Uncle John and Aunt Fanny! Don't dare to tell him that we know

who he is if we ever see him again, which I sincerely hope we won't."

But we did. It was the last day of our eventful trip, and although we had heard the automobile, we had seen it only in the far distance, taking the same route as ours. He must often have stayed at the same hotel, but we never saw him out of his car, though the mysterious five-dollar bill made its appearance in the collection every evening. We had a little roll of them, which we would not touch, and we lived economically on our other earnings. We could not send them back to him, but Amy suggested giving them to a charity.

Now we were only eighteen miles from Pensico, and I had telegraphed my married sister to expect us that evening. We set out at nine o'clock, feeling much pleased with ourselves, and already composing a triumphant epistle announcing the success of our trip to Uncle John, when, just as we were arranging ourselves in the go-cart in front of the hotel, a telegram was handed to Amy. She tore it open.

"What on earth does this mean?" she demanded. "It's from Uncle John, and he says, 'If in any difficulty draw on Willis to necessary amount.' Laura, I see it all! Those bills were from Uncle John. He sent that wretched man to look us up, and he has been following us and reporting to him. It's a regular plot, and I'll never forgive them—never!"

"No wonder he wanted to hide his face!" said I. "Thank heaven we are nearly at Pensico, so he can't get us out of any more scrapes."

We were so indignant at the perfidy of Mr. Willis that we forgot to make our usual inquiries about the road, so we took a wrong turning, which lost a good deal of time, and when we were finally set on the right track the old man who directed us warned us to save Paul as much as possible.

"Shutesbury Hill will take the dander out of any hoss," he said. "It's nine mile long, sandy road, and jest five trees on the hull hill."

We thanked him for his caution and proceeded on our way, and in half an hour or so Paul picked up a stone.

We worked over his foot in vain. We could not dislodge the stone, there was no house in sight, and the pitiless midday sun was beating down on the first barren slope of formidable, treeless Shutesbury Hill. We pushed on at a snail's pace, hoping to meet a boy with a jackknife, or any means of relieving poor Paul, who was going lamer at every step; but we saw no one. We could go neither back nor forward; we had no shade and no water; the flies drove Paul frantic when he stood still, and when he went he limped so that we were ready to cry. And suddenly we heard "chug-chug," and on the slope of the hill coming toward us was the automobile.

"The wretch! He patrols the road where he knows we must pass!" said Amy. "I shall tell him what we think of him."

"Let him get the stone out of Paul's foot first," I cautioned.

"I'm afraid you are in trouble," he said, as he came up to us.

"You might add 'as usual,' Mr. Willis," said Amy, in a tone which evidently struck dismay to his heart. He tore off his goggles and mask, and confronted us with a red and rueful countenance. Never have I seen a man more hopelessly embarrassed.

"Mr. Gray thought—" he began, but Amy cut him short.

"It makes no difference *what* Uncle John thought. Uncle John and I never by any possible chance hold the same opinion about anything or anybody—and why he should select *you* to follow us and report our doings to him, I am at a loss to understand."

I was beginning to feel a little sorry for Uncle John's luckless emissary, especially when Amy went off and sat on the stone wall in the blazing sun instead of availing herself of the shelter of the automobile, while he worked over Paul's foot.

Of course he got the stone out—he always managed to do anything that

he attempted—and then he began unhitching Paul.

"What on earth are you doing?" I demanded.

"Your horse isn't fit to drag a carriage over this hill. He'll be laid up for six months if you attempt it. The only thing to do is to hitch the runabout to my machine, and let one of you sit in it and lead him. Where's your halter? I'll run slowly so that he needn't go much above a walk."

At first Amy flatly refused her consent to this plan, but I finally bundled her into the go-cart, which Mr. Willis had fastened to the automobile, and thrust Paul's halter into her unwilling hand, for I knew that there was nothing else for us to do. I sat on the back seat of the automobile, a buffer between the chief combatants, and as we went along I told Mr. Willis what we thought of him.

"How did Mr. Gray know what we were going to do?" I demanded.

"Well, I was going to take this trip anyhow, and I asked him for Miss Gray's address because I wanted to see her. So I went to your house and you were not there, but a man I knew was sitting on your steps, and he told me what you were going to do."

"George!" I mentally ejaculated.

"So I had occasion to telephone Mr. Gray that night, *on business*, and when he asked me if I had found you at home I told him what you intended to do. I'm very sorry I mentioned it, I assure you. Then Mr. Gray said he wished I would keep an eye on you and see that you didn't come to grief. He said," Mr. Willis continued severely, "that neither of you had any sense about money, and that I was to see that you didn't get stranded somewhere for lack of funds."

"We have not spent one of those ridiculous five-dollar bills," I said, with crushing scorn, "and we must beg you to take them back to Mr. Gray and tell him that we had no use for them."

"I told him Miss Gray wouldn't like it," he said dismally. "I knew she would think me an awful ass."

But I thought perhaps I could look out for you without your knowing it, don't you see? For it was a risky thing for two girls to do, now wasn't it?"

"Is that why you always kept on those dreadful goggles?" I asked.

"I thought she would rather accept any trifling service from a stranger than from a man she had known—and snubbed!" he burst forth.

"Did she snub you?" I asked innocently.

"Oh, rather! It was cheeky, my trying to look her up, but you see, Miss Vanderveer—well—oh, the fact is, I love her so!"

It was only by accusing Amy of jerking Paul's mouth that I finally induced her to change seats with me. I thought that man deserved a chance to explain himself, and he took it.

I sat in the go-cart, talking to Paul, but even at that distance I was conscious of a gradual change in the atmosphere. If Amy had not liked him uncommonly well she would never have considered it necessary to run away from him. We had been all-sufficient to each other so far, and we had planned to spend our remaining

days together in determined spinsterhood. But for this I might have regarded George as an epoch instead of an episode. Now a lonely vista of single blessedness without Amy spread before my prophetic gaze, for something told me that I was going to lose her. I wanted her to be happy, of course, but no other friend could ever take her place in my heart. By this time the two in the automobile had forgotten my very existence. I felt homesick and deserted, as I resolutely turned my face to the rear and talked to Paul.

A little cloud of dust was rising far in our wake. We were now on the downward slope of the long hill, and the spires of peaceful Pensico were rising in the valley beneath us. There were goldenrod and purple asters by the roadside. I tried to remember that I was a philosopher, but all the while I was pitying myself most sincerely. The cloud of dust was rapidly resolving itself into a coasting bicyclist. He came alongside and flourished his cap, and my heart rose suddenly at sight of his radiant, sunburnt face. It was George!

THE MEADOW

STILL hang the moonlit branches,
And the wide meadow seems
A vale where vaguely hover
Faint dreams and ghosts of dreams,

That come each summer evening
With warm, soft hush again,
Bringing the old-time beauty
And the immortal pain.

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE.

MODERN DEFINITION

KNICKER—What is the rule of three?
BOCKER—A divorce.

MISS QUIGLEY, TOBACCONIST

By J. J. Bell

TWENTY years ago it was the only tobacco-shop in Glasgow's western suburb. Yet it did not altogether flaunt its independence before the eyes of the local smokers. Those who were early abroad found the shutters down by 8 A.M.; those who were late could have their pouches or cases filled at midnight, although two hours earlier the gas jets in the window were lowered to tiny peeps.

But perhaps the window looked most attractive in a dim light, for its contents were generally shabby and stale. The meerschaums were yellowed, their plush and silken cases faded; the briars wore tarnished silver bands; the clays of numerous shapes and sizes were dusty; the packets of tobaccos and cigarettes were bleached by many suns; the loose tobaccos appeared dry and brittle; the cigar boxes—mostly "dummies"—suggested seediness rather than luxury; while the "fancy goods," such as pouches, cases, holders, walking-sticks and match-boxes, seemed to have abandoned all hope of ever getting sold. In those days, of course, tobacconists' windows at their best and most brilliant made but dull displays, for as yet they had not reached the period of dainty tins and labels, lovely or gaudy show-cards, highly-finished photographs of more or less prominent men and more or less obscure maidens, and frantic offers of cash and other rewards for smoking So-and-so's speciality. But Miss Quigley's window was duller than most of the tobacconists' windows of its time, and had it not been for a little band of regular customers

Miss Quigley's trade must have been even duller than her window. Happily, gentlemen were more regular in their habits, bad and good, two decades ago than they are today. Advertisements caught their eyes without capturing their souls. One could buy without having previously been bought; one could sell without having first sold oneself.

How Miss Adelaide Quigley—she was modest A. Quigley on her sign-board—came to be a tobacconist had been explained by several of her older customers in several ways; but the real reason was known only to herself, and she was a woman who could keep a secret. After all, most women can keep secrets—about themselves. In all her ways Miss Quigley was a lady—not merely "quite a lady" or "an exceedingly ladylike person," as the middle-class dame is so fond of expressing it. She wore her dignity as she wore her old garments and still older bonnet—as if she were used to it, not as if she had got it from a father or a husband a few years previously. The troublesome youngster who invaded her shop for "change o' a thrupp'ny bit" received the same courteous attention as did the old smoker who, going off on his summer holiday, entered with an order which meant much to the tobacconist. The workman wanting a "farden clay" was as cheerfully welcomed as the gentleman desirous of inspecting some cigars at "er—about a bob apiece." Miss Quigley was a respecter of all persons, because she had so far respected herself. She had sought always to be genteel, but at the

age of thirty-eight had, fortunately, only succeeded in being gentle.

Every morning a little before eight she opened her shop, and Mr. Fergus, who went early into town, never failed to call and purchase a threepenny Manila cheroot, one half of which he consumed while proceeding to his office, the other half while returning home. Mr. Fergus maintained that a threepenny Manila cheroot was economical and respectable, whereas a fourpenny Havana cigar was extravagant, if not positively dissipated. Between fifteen and twenty minutes past eight every second morning old Mr. Pagan had his snuff-box charged with "Genuine Kendal Brown," and invariably annexed a large extra pinch from the jar—for luck, as he put it; after which he fled snorting to catch the 8.25 car, and as often as not missed it. Immediately after his departure appeared Mr. Slimming, a bashful youth of some forty summers, who smoked imported American cigarettes at sixpence the packet of ten, and concealed the fact from his stern parents by consuming tiny but extremely aromatic silver-coated pellets from a small round brazen box bearing an embossed likeness of the late Prince Consort. Thereafter the greengrocer from next door dropped in to borrow a match, and the policeman popped in to remark on the weather. Otherwise Miss Quigley had few customers upon whom she could depend until the evening, when most of her business was transacted. Chance customers were rare, and someone whose supply of wit was only equaled by that of heart once declared his conviction that Miss Quigley spent the greater part of the day in wondering whether she should redress her window or her head.

It has been already suggested that Miss Quigley wore an old bonnet, and now it may be added that never, since she opened the shop for the first time nine years before, had she been seen in any other bonnet. During that period the bonnet may have undergone minor structural alterations, but at the time to which I now refer it was a rusty

wreck from whence now and then a black bead would drop, as if unable to hang on any longer. Still, there were left beads sufficient to make a faint sound when she bowed over the counter to greet or to speed a customer. The bonnet was on her head when she took down the shutters; it was still there when she put them up; and report had it that she slept in it.

Wrinkled out of proportion to its years was Miss Quigley's countenance, and yellow was her complexion, as though she were given to taking little fresh air and much strong tea—which was indeed the case. Her eyes were dull but kindly, her mouth melancholy yet not unwilling to smile, her nose ineffective and her hair thin and streaked with gray. Over her narrow shoulders, in cold weather, she hung a black, beaded dolman, once velveteen, and encased her worn hands in beaded mittens. On the third finger of her left hand she wore a ring set with sad-looking little garnets, while her other jewelry comprised old-fashioned, clumsy earrings with swinging pendants. Sombre, weary and not a little foolish she appeared to the casual customer, but to the regular one she was a person not altogether lacking in humor.

The shop itself was less dingy than the window. The glass cases and jars were free from dust; the brass scales were brightly polished. When you pressed the latch and pushed open the door there was a smart *ting* overhead and you entered the pleasant cedar and tobacco-scented atmosphere at the same moment that Miss Quigley, who never kept anyone waiting, came from the glazed and curtained narrow door of her living-room.

On your right was the counter, the bare part on Miss Quigley's side hacked and scored, the outer edge scorched in countless places; and on your left, under sundry lithographed show-cards, was a shabby, horse-hair covered form, bounded at one end by a stand of antique walking-sticks and canes, and at the other end by a show-case labeled "Choice Cigars," and containing a heap of pieces of twine rich in knots, a molt-

ing feather brush and a few damaged pipes and mouthpieces.

If you were a regular customer and not in a hurry, you would seat yourself on the form and enter into conversation with Miss Quigley; and even if you were in a hurry you would be invited to sit down until your order was executed. Miss Quigley always referred with a sigh to "this poor place of mine," and not her bluntest regular customer would have risked offending her by refusing her offer of hospitality. Indeed, several of her regular customers kept soft little corners in their hearts for her, and even when not in want of her wares would drop in of an evening, with the idea of cheering up the "lonely creature" with a brief chat on the weather and local topics, although, to be sure, Miss Quigley was not much affected by the former nor deeply interested in the latter. The manufacturers' travelers were also kindly disposed toward her and reported her at headquarters to be a respectable, honest, if lazy woman, whose credit might be considered good for all she was likely to order. Somehow Miss Quigley, in spite of her neglected window, contrived to plant seeds of confidence in the minds of those who were acquainted with her, and gradually these seeds sprouted and grew up, so that in her day of need, as will shortly be discovered, they had become trusty staves for her to lean upon.

II

ONE morning, toward the end of the year 1881, the greengrocer from next door, having dropped in to borrow his daily match, presented Miss Quigley with a gaily illuminated calendar which he had received from the provision merchant across the way. It was his annual return for the matches.

"Time flies," observed the greengrocer, selecting a couple of matches whose heads had stuck together. "As Dr. Lampson said to me yesterday—speakin' in a furrin' tongue, as if he was gi'ein' an order to the

druggist—he says, says he, '*Tempers fewgy!*'"

Miss Quigley smiled sadly. "I suppose time does fly—for some people. Thank you for this beautiful calendar."

"Ye're welcome, ye're welcome!"

Eh, did ye notice if I took the len' o' a match, ma'am?"

"I did not, Mr. McHardy. But help yourself."

"Thank ye kindly. Mornin'!" And the greengrocer departed.

Miss Quigley spread the calendar for 1882 on the counter, and with pen and ink drew a heavy circle round the "13" in the square devoted to the days of April. Then she bore it into the back room and hung it on a nail in the wall at the side of the fireplace, after removing from the same spot the calendar for the year nearly ended.

"Ah, dearie me!" she sighed, "it has been a long wait, and a sad wait, and a lonesome wait, but the end isn't so far off now. It makes my heart sick to think of the years I've waited here. Nearly ten years! But it was the only thing to do, and I haven't altogether wasted the time. I haven't quite failed—and yet I haven't done nearly well enough—not nearly well enough! I've dreamed too much and neglected things. I should have cleaned my window and left poetry alone. But I thought—I hoped—"

She sat down on a rickety wicker chair and let her eyes rest on the faded photograph which hung directly below the calendar. It was the likeness of a man, a little over thirty, with a weak, well-featured face above a pair of handsome shoulders.

Presently she rose and went to a wall-press on the other side of the fireplace, took a thin black booklet from it and returned to her seat.

"It's silly of me," she said to herself, as she opened the booklet—her bank-book. "I can't make it more by looking at it. . . . And it isn't enough—not nearly enough. And how—oh, dear God! *how* am I to make it enough in less than four months? How?" Miss Quigley wept silently for the next few minutes. Then she

got up, put the book back in the press, sniffed and wiped her eyes.

"I must have a cup of tea," she murmured.

III

"CERTAINLY, madam!" said the sympathetic traveler of the firm with whom Miss Quigley did most of her business. "We'll let the account stand over till my next call—toward the end of April. I'm sorry you found the holiday trade so poor."

He was tempted, as usual, to offer a hint on the benefit of an attractive window, but refrained as he had done hitherto.

"It was very disappointing, sir, and I hate to ask such a favor as you have so kindly granted," Miss Quigley replied, bowing her head to hide her shame and emotion, while a couple of beads trickled from her ancient bonnet and pattered on the counter.

"Don't worry yourself about that," the traveler gently returned. "Have you an order for me today?"

Miss Quigley recovered herself and slowly recited the list of the goods she required. "I should not be giving you such a large order when I cannot pay your account," she said humbly, "but I'm going to try a little cheap sale of my old stock, and—and that should put me right for—for next month."

This was the third week of March, and a few days later the little cheap sale—"for a fortnight only"—was started.

But, apparently, it was not a success, for on an evening early in April Miss Quigley was discovered in tears by Mr. Fergus, who had dropped in for an extra cheroot and a chat.

"Business has been so bad," sighed Miss Quigley, when pressed to explain her trouble. "I'm sure I don't know what I shall do. Everyone wants their money, and the rent is due next month."

"Bless my soul, that's bad!" said Mr. Fergus, at the conclusion of a tale of sordid trial. "I had no idea you were so worried."

"Oh, but why should I bother you, sir, with my troubles? I feel your

kindness in inquiring very sincerely, but——"

"Don't mention it, don't mention it! H'm! h'm! I'll have to turn over a new leaf and smoke more, and get my friends who come in here to do the same," said Mr. Fergus, with an attempt at jocularity.

She smiled faintly, hesitated, and broke down again.

"It's hard for a woman to be sold up for want of a few pounds, sir, but I suppose it's the way of the world," she said tremulously.

"It's a damn bad way!" cried Mr. Fergus, indignant. "I'll be in tomorrow," he added, and abruptly quitted the shop.

Next day he insisted on her acceptance of a loan of twenty pounds to remove her load of anxiety regarding the half-year's rent, and at last she took the money on his consenting to remove, by way of security, several cases of cigars, including her stock of his favorite Manilas, along with sundry expensive meerschaum pipes. Mr. Fergus further benefited her by speaking quietly to a number of his friends who, although they could not or would not lend money, did the next best thing in relieving her of a large portion of her stock for cash.

"Oh, yes, I'm sure I'll manage now," she replied to the kindly inquiries of these customers, who noticed a new light in her eyes and a general briskness in her manner and methods, and said to one another: "It's worth while doing something to help a decent woman like her."

On the forenoon of the thirteenth of April Miss Quigley received a telegram:

Free at last! Waiting for you. Expect tomorrow night.

WILLIAM.

"Free at last!" she sobbed to herself in the privacy of her wretched little back room. "Free at last, after all these years! . . . Oh, William, William, I hope you'll be pleased with what I have done for you! I wish it had been more! And yet—and yet—Oh, God, forgive me!"

IV

WHEN the greengrocer would have dropped in for his match the following morning he found the tobacconist's door closed and pinned to it an envelope bearing the words, "Shut for today."

About seven o'clock in the evening of the same day Miss Quigley was gazing anxiously and fearfully from the window of a third-class compartment as the London train slowed into Euston. Suddenly she beheld him standing on the platform staring at the carriages in front.

"William! William!" she cried, in a queer, breaking voice. "William!"

He looked straight at her and turned away.

"Take time, ma'am, take time," said a porter, preventing her from jumping out ere the train came to rest.

"Now, ma'am. Any luggage?"

But Miss Quigley, forgetful of her modest possessions in the rack and under the seat, stumbled from the compartment, recovered balance, ran along the platform and halted, gasping, in front of the man, who was still staring about him.

"William!" she sobbed; "William, dear!"

The magnificently strong man almost leaped at her voice.

"William, don't you know me?"

"Good God! . . . Is it you, Adelaide? . . . I—I—I didn't know—didn't know you at first," he stammered, his face losing color, his brow growing moist.

She gazed at him through her tears, speechless.

"Your luggage—where's your luggage?" he asked abruptly, tearing his eyes from the hideous fascination of her miserable dolman and ancient bonnet. "Your luggage," he repeated, touching her arm and drawing his hand away quickly at the fleshless feel.

She roused herself as from a dream, and, after some search, showed him her few belongings. He tried to talk meanwhile, but his brain was half stunned, his tongue seemed tied.

"I can't marry her. She can't expect it of me now," was all he could think, while every now and then he felt her anxious eyes on his face.

And she, who had expected to find a jail-worn, sad-faced, weary man, whose nigh broken heart it would be her joy to salve and heal, found her lover of ten years ago—found him grown stronger, handsomer than she could have dreamed.

He took charge of her shabby bag and brown-paper parcels and led the way to a cab.

"You would prefer a boarding-house to a hotel?" he said mechanically.

Receiving no answer, he glanced down at her and saw that her face was white and her expression terror-stricken.

"What is it, Adelaide?" he asked gently, pricked by shame and pity.

Trembling, she pointed to one of the railway police standing near.

He laughed quietly. "Don't be alarmed. I've paid my debt. . . . But you're looking faint. Better come to the refreshment-room. Come, this way."

He conducted her, tenderly enough, to the nearest bar, and was about to order spirits when she begged for a cup of tea. Having procured it, he set it before her at a small table in a retired corner and seated himself beside her.

There was a long silence.

At last he said gently: "I'm afraid the long journey has been too much for you, Adelaide."

Her tears dropped into the cup she was drinking from, her fingers shook, and she had to set it down.

"It has been so long—so terribly long!" she murmured. "It seems to have taken all the strength out of me."

Oh, William, I don't mean the journey—I mean the time in Glasgow. I have had no friends since I went there."

"And you went there for me!" he whispered, checking a groan. "You gave up everything for me—me, the convict—your friends, your ambition for writing, your home and its comforts—everything! You hid yourself

and kept a wretched shop, starved yourself—I can see it—and suffered in order to—to give me a fresh start. Oh, Adelaide, Adelaide!" Shame and pity tortured him.

"To give you a fresh start, William," she said softly, drying her eyes. "I—I've something to tell you, dear—something dreadful. But I did it all for the best—for *you*. Yes; it will give you a fresh start—three hundred and twenty pounds nearly—won't it?"

"Did you manage to save that sum?" he asked, seeing that she was waiting for him to speak. "I—I wish to heaven you had not done it; I wish you had not suffered doing it. . . . Mr. Hamilton—you remember him?—he always had faith in me—Mr. Hamilton is going to take me into his business, to travel abroad for him, on a very good salary. So, of course, I couldn't touch a penny of your money now. . . . But it was wonderful of you! . . . Why, what's the matter?"

She was staring at him with wild eyes. In a few seconds she had learned the utter bitterness of her fate. He did not require her help. He was going abroad. His pity was hers, but his love had gone out. She *knew* it was so.

She turned from gazing at him, and for an instant caught sight of herself in a mirror.

"What's the matter, Adelaide?" he asked again kindly.

At last she spoke, and her voice was quite calm, though a little hoarse.

"I didn't save it all. I thought I hadn't saved enough, and so——"

And then she told him everything without sparing herself, told him the tale even unto its ugly end without emotion.

His elbows on the table, his hands clasped over his eyes, he sat listening to her. When she finished speaking he moved slightly and returned to his former position. Several minutes passed ere he took his hands from his eyes; his face was pale and drawn.

"You must go back at once, Adelaide," he whispered huskily, shakily.

"Go back? It's too late!"

"Hush! it is not too late. You will be there by the morning in time to open the—the shop, as usual. You must go back for your own sake! To think that you should have done this for *my* sake—dear!"

"I would have paid them all back afterward," she muttered vaguely.

"Yes, yes! But if you go back now it will just be like a bad dream. I should never have asked you to come to me. I should have gone to you. But it was what we arranged so long ago."

"So long ago!" she echoed stupidly. "So long ago, so long——"

The man, aching with shame and pity, took her to a restaurant where he persuaded her to drink some strong soup and a glass of wine, after which she recovered her nerves somewhat, although she made no further attempt to talk, merely listening to his sympathy and his directions, and occasionally nodding her acquiescence.

"And so," he concluded, "you'll be there in the morning, and nobody need be any the wiser, unless—unless you care to tell anybody that a very unworthy fellow is coming to marry you within a month from now. Do you understand, dear?"

"Very well, William," she replied listlessly.

He saw her on board the North train, doing what he could to make her comfortable; and at the last, to the amusement of several passengers, he bent his head and kissed her limp fingers in their woefully shabby black cotton glove. She, however, did not seem to observe the action, and a passenger whispered to a friend:

"Perhaps his aunt has money, though she looks like a pauper."

So it was that twelve hours later Miss Quigley, wan and weary, turned the key in the door of her shop as the policeman, who had just come on his beat, strolled up, saying:

"Fine mornin', ma'am! Ye've got home again."

"Home?" wondered Miss Quigley. "Home? . . . Well, if this isn't home,

where is home?" And shutting the shop again from the inside she tottered into the back room, dropped her belongings on the floor among the littered rubbish of her flight and fell on her knees by the rickety wicker chair, and cried the harsh bitterness out of her heart, leaving only the tender sorrow.

Later she rose, made and lighted the fire, and, having washed her lined face and worn hands, brewed a cup of good strong tea.

"Maybe it's home, after all," she murmured.

Later still she set her room in order, and proceeded with unpacking her luggage until she came upon his photograph, when she had to halt for another cry.

And then she opened her shop "to the public," and somehow it looked very dingy and dusty; wherefore she set about brushing and dusting and polishing until she was ready to drop with fatigue.

"I'll do the window tomorrow, and every week after," she told herself, as she rested in the afternoon.

And she did.

V

Not many evenings later Mr. Fergus left the shop with his twenty pounds in

his pocket, and, meeting an old friend on the street, said:

"Look here, my boy, if you're going in to see Miss Quigley, mind your eyesight!"

"Why? Has she knocked over a jar of snuff?"

"No; but she's got on new clothes and a new and *gorgeous* bonnet!"

"High time!"

"Yes, it is high time she had a chance. She has had a little money left her, it appears, and trade is improving daily. But, go in, if only to see the bonnet. It's *great*!"

And she did not marry William, although he journeyed North and begged her to do so. She knew the difference between a sore conscience and a sore heart, for she had suffered from both, and she knew that William came to her with the former.

"No," she said to him very gently. "You are going abroad, and I am going to stay at—at home."

"What? Here? You don't call *this* home, Adelaide?" he exclaimed, glancing round the little room, now cozy enough and by no means shabbily furnished.

"Yes, I do, William," she replied. "Now, don't say any more about it, and I'll make you a cup of tea before you go. Have another cigar."



HIS SOCIAL STATUS

"HE is in society, isn't he?"

"Yes, but only as a sort of vermiform appendix."



HOW SHE CAME TO MISS

SALLY GAY—She threw herself at his head repeatedly, but—
DOLLY SWIFT—Oh, well—Cholly has no head.

THE CRADLE-CHILD

FORGOTTEN, in a chamber lone,
 The hooded Cradle, brown and old,
 Began to rock, began to moan,
 "Where are the babes I used to hold?"

"To men and women they are grown,
 And through the world their way must make."
 The Cradle rocked and made its moan,
 "My babes no single step could take!"

"A helmsman one, on wide seas blown,
 His sinewy hands the wheel employs."
 The Cradle rocked and made its moan,
 "My babes could scarcely grasp their toys."

"And one, with words of winning tone,
 God's shepherd, goes the lost to seek."
 The Cradle rocked and still made moan,
 "The babes I held no word could speak!"

"And one, with children of her own,
 Her life is toil and love and prayer!"
 The Cradle rocked and still made moan,
 "My babes of babes could take no care!"

"Now, all that once were mine are flown
 But one, that still with me shall bide—
 (The Cradle ceased to rock, to moan)—
 The sweetest one—the babe who died!"

EDITH M. THOMAS.

CHIDED

THE girls were in despair over papa.

"Alas!" they murmured, "we cannot get him to do anything that is affected by the best people. He will not play golf, as it gets on his nerves. He will not play tennis, as it is too violent. He doesn't care for automobiling, nor even horseback-riding. Dear mama, what is to become of us? Is there no way that we can get him to do anything?"

But mama tapped on the table indignantly with her fan.

"Have you no filial feelings?" she observed. "Can it be possible that I have brought you up with such an utter disregard for your poor, dear papa? Can you not permit him to live and die in obscurity while making enough to keep us going? Surely, my darlings, this is all we have a right to expect from a Providence already severely overtaxed."

"A WOMAN, A SPANIEL AND A WALNUT TREE"

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

"**H**EREAFTER I shall not despair of reaching the summit of Parnassus."

The Honorable Dale Valliant paused breathlessly to peer through branches which interlaced before him at the end of a mountain road that apparently led nowhere in particular.

"The rocks on this mountain are something unmentionable, sir, and I only hope they'll have a care of the hortomobile down at the farmhouse below," remarked his manservant, with a note of unqualified resignation as he toiled upward in the rear.

"My good Marcus, it is not every man who is permitted by the gods—even on Parnassus—to carry a piece of curly walnut on his shoulders. I believe that grapevines or young kids were the customary sacrifice, but they will doubtless make allowance for our verdant inexperience. Give me one of your legs—the walnut ones—and I'll lead you on to fortune and to fame."

"Thank you, no, sir," said Marcus grimly. He was attuned to the vagaries attendant upon his master's passion for collecting antiques of every character, but an hour earlier he had received a shock from the battery of the unexpected.

They had stored the automobile in the barn of the farmhouse below, where the Honorable Dale's enthusiasm over an old bedpost of curly walnut standing in the corner had brought about its own Nemesis. Marcus, who could detect the depth of a leaf of veneering with his eyes shut, who traveled to unpronounceable climes in

search of curios to satisfy his master's insatiate tastes—Marcus, who ranked as a prince among expert collectors, had been mistaken for a furniture mender. Only the exquisite *moiré* finish of the curly walnut had allayed an open expression of his wrath. Following a glance from the Honorable Dale, Marcus permitted himself to be led, lamb-like, to examine the lock of a painted pine press, and to put a leg upon a kitchen chair. But he departed with the curly walnut over his shoulder.

"The place is certain to be hereabouts," ruminated the Honorable Dale, examining a pocket map. "'Road to the left up Fort Mountain'—if we go up higher we'll be asphyxiated—'Along north branch of river'—here it is below us!—'Ruined bridge near the cliffs'—right! Marcus, there should be a lane somewhere between us and chaos. All old places begin or end in a lane. Then according to Nature we should come to a level; even a mountain cannot go on forever. Then the Coble place—'Beard of the Prophet!' he broke off, as a beam of light struck him in the eyes and he stepped aside.

A sudden opening in the trees, a grassy road beyond, and a shaft of sunset revealed that for which he sought. A hedge loomed black and inaccessible before them, and single pines thrust protectingly above it. Beyond, against the indistinct blue of the mountain, the tower of an old house struck sharply upon the sky, the sunset turning its panes to copper.

One of these beams had reached the road. A brush of dark woods leaned against the yellowing west at the turn of the grassy level, and a little stream under the cliffs nearby broke into laughter as it leaped down the rocks—Nature's youth mocking at its age.

II

"COULD anything be more beautiful! I love it. Oh, Nancy, say that you love it, too!"

Her white gown trailed across the grass, through the drifted red leaves of a gum-tree, and her face was alight with youth and enjoyment, while the sunset caught her hair in a fitting net. Her companion, a modern type of controlled spinsterhood, put her lorgnette up and surveyed the mountain.

"Very nice, Eve, very nice indeed; but a little—near and—er—large, isn't it?"

"Oh, Nancy, Nancy Valliant! What should a mountain be but large? Does nothing old appeal to you?" Her laughter was delightfully spontaneous.

"Mercy, no! You should really cultivate a taste for the modern, my dear Eve."

"I can't understand how you happened in our family, Cousin Nancy. We are so dreadfully old—the falling branches of an ancient tree." The young chatelaine's face dimpled as the other turned her glass upon its radiance.

"Your immediate danger of dissolution is not evident. Yes, I suppose a lover of ruins would pronounce the place beautiful, Eve dear, and I fancy you were wise not to sell it—yet, at any rate."

The other turned a shocked face.

"Nancy! Do you imagine that forty thousand mules laden with a million apiece could drag it from me? Why, I love every old gray rock and diamond pane, every stick and stone, every flowering bush and tree! And the dear river and the cliffs and the mountain and——"

"The rat-holes," interpolated Miss Valliant. "And don't forget the back porch, my dear; it is a man-trap—or would be if there were any men in this wood." She sighed, a modern echo of an ancient lament. "The finished masculine is apparently not indigenous to the mountain. It rather over-produces angular feminines in purple sunbonnets, doesn't it?"

"Old Nicholas is a mountaineer, and Ezra Brock down at the store is a very nice young man," said the chatelaine, with spirit, "and I'm glad there are no others. I do not think I like men very much."

They had reached the hedge now, through which sight could not penetrate but sound was quite audible, and the chatelaine stopped suddenly, her hand upon her companion's arm.

"Listen! Someone is coming! Isn't it like the hedge of the Sleeping Beauty? Only you must be the Princess, Nancy; I could never sleep enough!"

A masculine voice on the other side of the hedge sounded, drawing nearer.

"This must be the famed Coble place, but how does one gain entrance? I thought such a hedge as this belonged to fairy tales. Still, I suppose as only ghosts are said to inhabit the house they can gently waft themselves over the top."

"We'll get in some way, sir," said a second voice, "and if it's only a matter of a claw-foot or a curled leg we'll find it! Maybe she hasn't an arm." Marcus always alluded to his curios as feminine. "She'll be doubly vallyble without or with only one, sir."

She on the other side of the hedge gave a gasp of mingled horror and dismay.

"But if she's real clumsy and on-manageable, sir, I guess I can take 'em off, as I've done before!"

She on the other side of the hedge fled precipitately, dragging her companion by the hand, but the last remark reached her.

"It's only a goat, sir. A goat runs that way!"

III

WHEN the Honorable Dale had dropped the brass knocker for the third time and heard the sound strike only cavernous silence within he went to one of the great, low windows and drew himself up by the sill and peered in.

"If all were not fair in love of research this would be inexcusable!" he murmured. "Lo! I behold a claw-foot!"

Marcus propped his walnut leg in a corner of the porch and ran around to another window.

"Excuse me, Your Honor"—only in moments of stress did Marcus drop into oratorical terms—"the andirons in this empty house has heads as big as cannon-balls! If it's only a matter of a few ghosts, sir, I'd say we'd best go in and learn their language!"

"Apparently no one else lives here now." The Honorable Dale rapped on a pane and a voice above, unheard by him, whispered.

"Impertinent!"

Two bright eyes peeped down between the shutters. Then she flew to tell Miss Valliant. "Nancy, he shall see everything the place holds! He shall be filled with envy and greed—then he can go! I'm sick of collectors, and have forbidden the servants to speak to him."

Presently the Honorable Dale passed around to the rear and stood in the kitchen door. A capacious old negress was standing before the enormous stove, and he greeted her courteously.

"Good evening, aunty. Is anyone living here at present? Can I see anyone?"

The old woman bowed and calmly went on frying chicken.

"Then, aunty, will you exercise your unusual eloquence by finding out if I may have a night's lodging here or board for the night? I really cannot go back to the foot of the mountain before dark; besides, the pangs of hunger assail me!"

The Honorable Dale could be as ingratiating as the next Anglo-Saxon

when he chose. His handsome eyes pleaded with the old woman, as he stood in the door, hat in hand.

"Aunty, look upon me. I am not accustomed to being hungry and—powers that be! Marcus, observe that India tureen!—that iron crane!—that— Oh, my good woman, can't I get my supper here? Hunger is a most uncomfortable sensation!"

A gleam lighted the old negress's eyes as she accurately took his stalwart measure and set him down as every inch a gentleman, in spite of his chaff. She led him around to the front of the house and a moment later the massive entrance doors opened and he was motioned into the dim, high-ceiled, ancient hall beyond. Then the doors closed and the Honorable Dale succumbed to the invitation of an easy-chair and ruminated. Marcus was surveying the interior with a trained eye. Presently he tiptoed over to his master and murmured:

"I think, sir, we'd better manage to stay a week. It's the biggest find yet!"

Meanwhile the chatelaine, with a flame of excitement, was giving low-toned directions in the dining-room.

"Put on the India set, Dilsy. Serve him with supper immediately. Light the Roman lamp—the one with chains. Light this brass one! Get out the fleur-de-lis cups—"

"Not de Queen's china, missy, fo' dis gemman!"

"Yes, yes! Everything, I tell you. And he is only a collector, Dilsy, not a gentleman!"

"Pears mighty lak it," said the old woman. "He's got a gemman's funny way wid him." The chatelaine's inner consciousness was reluctantly aware of the same sensation when she looked down between the shutters upon a glimpse of broad-shouldered masculinity in gray tweed, but she only replied severely.

"I am tired of being besieged by collectors, and shall find a way to rid us of them. I wish him to see everything."

Then she flew upstairs to Miss Val-

liant, who lay upon a wicker lounge in a window.

"Nancy, Nancy, do wake up! How can you sleep so much? I have the most delightful idea!" She pirouetted back and forth and dropped into a chair laughing.

Miss Valliant opened her eyes. "I sleep scientifically, my dear Eve—a rest cure to remake my complexion for all next winter. What's the fresh excitement in this intoxicating atmosphere? Did you awaken me to listen to a panegyric upon the furniture man?"

"Oh, Nancy, do listen! You know I hate men——"

"A pity. They are more facile than women."

"And the one downstairs is an impertinent creature who peeped in the windows. Fancy! Now, he actually wants a night's lodging. He shall stay! I have ordered his supper——"

"Eve! A strange man? Are you crazy?"

"Oh, Nancy Valliant, you have never lived up on a mountain. We've had to do it scores of times. Are there not twenty rooms closed? At any rate, he is a horrid collector. None of them has any conscience. He shall stay here tonight and see everything—the India, the bronzes, the Florentine case, the fleur-de-lis——"

"But my dear Eve——"

"Wait! When he is fairly inflated with desire to buy them I shall put so enormous a price upon them that he will go off crestfallen. When I have refused all his offers——"

"A little premature, my dear. He may be a married man."

"Nancy, you are horrid! Then, I shall show him the door, with my price-list in his memory. He is the seventh collector in two months. I shall put a stop to them this way. Isn't it exciting?"

"Wildly," said Miss Valliant, closing her eyes. "I have heard that savages invent odd methods of amusement, and that to a grave-digger there is no dissipation so exhilarating as a funeral. I shall go to sleep again.

You may send me up anything for supper that is left from the clutches of the furniture man."

IV

"Of course you understand that I am boarding here for the night, or I could not accept this hospitality at the hands of those who are in care of the place."

The Honorable Dale politely accosted old Michael, who stood in silent attendance upon the table. The old man's gesture was indicative of the imperative command of someone else, and his reply was to pass the hot biscuit.

Not a word had the Honorable Dale been able to elicit from the two retainers. Now, conscience and hunger met in combat before chicken, coffee and sponge-cake, and conscience lay overthrown. The surroundings wove a charm only experienced by a lover of the antique and traditional in art. He was under the thrall of the Roman lamp, with its tiny taper and carved chains, and of the massive brass one with its shaded Bohemian globe—of a wonderful crystal clock, shaped like an ancient fob-watch bound in brass, and the light which radiated from silver candelabra reflected on mahogany that knew no veneer. The Honorable Dale leaned back and sighed as the old man disappeared in the direction of the kitchen.

"Incredible and supernatural," he said. "Marcus, did you know before that ghosts wear red bandannas and fry chicken with the hand of art? They are apparently served by deaf-mutes also. Well, there are occasions when circumstances are stronger than man, and this is one of them."

Later that night, when the Honorable Dale walked the terrace smoking under the stars, the same old servant brought a lighted candle to the door and motioned to the staircase, with a bow that savored of more than one generation's training, and the Honor-

able Dale followed—as the adaptive spirit will—followed the massive candlestick.

The room above, with its inevitable high white bed, only accentuated the impression he received below. The old man put the candlestick down and closed the door behind him. Then the blood of the collector ran high, and he held the light up to look around him, at the great chest of drawers reaching almost to the ceiling, at the ancient table, the swinging mirror, the corner clock, the spindle-legged chairs. Then he blew out the light and went to the window, looking out on the giant mountain with a sigh of genuine content. It was the sigh of one who finds himself among the *lares* and *penates* which his heart loves. The moonlight flooded the trees below and made more impressive the gloom of rocks beyond. Through the insistent noises of night plashed the murmur of peaceful waters.

"There is no one on the place except these two old servants," said the Honorable Dale. "If there were, I should assuredly ask permission—but as it is, what harm can I do?" He struck a match and lighted his candle.

All absorbing passions have the moment of crux, when Fate throws her glove into Life's arena and the soul is lost or won through leaping after it over the bar of convention. He took his candle up and closed the door behind him. The draught from the great halls fanned the taper as he went down the steps to the dining-room, but on its threshold he stood transfixed by another gleam of light which came from the floor and revealed a crouching figure. His hand flew to his hip pocket, but the figure suddenly stood upward and made the same gesture.

"Marcus! What are you doing here?" said the Honorable Dale severely. There is little need for silence when only ghosts can overhear.

"I couldn't sleep for it, sir, and that's a fact! It's a genuine Chippendale, sir, that chair leg. I'll swear to

it in a court of law! We must take it along, sir."

"Take it along! My good man, from whom are we to buy it? Take it! And how about the brass and crystal clock—and that Roman lamp. A Benvenuto Cellini, I'd say! And that wonderful china?"

"All of 'em, sir! I wouldn't stir a foot without 'em if the ghosts flayed me alive; though, if you'd as lief, Mr. Dale, I'll manage the ghosts and you have an eye on the old woman. A woman that don't talk none is more dangerous than one that talks all the time, sir."

His master held the candle aloft. "The date of that engraving, Marcus, was what I came to investigate. If I'm not very much mistaken——"

"You're not mistaken, sir. It's worth its weight in diamonds, sir. If you could get a look at its sculp—Would you be so good, sir, as to step up on my back, and just tell me?"

Marcus adjusted himself under the engraving with back ready for its burden and the Honorable Dale was proceeding to step upward when a voice said:

"I am sorry to interrupt your game, but you will find more room on the terrace for leapfrog!"

The Honorable Dale jumped backward, with a chill striking to his marrow, as he turned to face the loveliest woman it had ever been his privilege to behold. The vision held a boat-shaped, ancient lamp which sent a glow upward to her face, and he stood speechless, gazing at her—at one white arm raised from its long, falling sleeve, the proud young head and its nestling rings of bright hair, the white throat from which laces fell. A hand held her white *négligé* at the breast, and the Honorable Dale forgot to look at the boat-shaped lamp, which was of itself significant. Her voice was coldly, politely sarcastic. "Possibly you had better first explain why a guest is here out of his room at this hour?"

The Honorable Dale straightened himself.

"Marcus, you may go," he said.

"Marcus—whoever you are—you may stay!" uttered the vision with such peremptoriness that Marcus ejaculated, "Yes, madam!" and his master, "Why, of course, Marcus, stay!"

"And now perhaps you can explain yourself." She turned upon him with sudden flame. The Honorable Dale laughed a little. He could not help it.

"I'm afraid I can't," he said. "At least, it will sound quite as bad as though I were a burglar."

"I'm sure that is what you appear to be. Otherwise why are you investigating my house at this hour?"

Her house! His heart gave a queer thump and an undefined thrill followed it.

"To say that I ask your pardon is trite," he commenced. "I do not even know to whom I am indebted; I only know that it is the Coble place, but I thought it was empty."

"Evidently, when I discovered you." Her tone brought the blood to his face. His Anglo-Saxon directness was touched and spurred to retort:

"I confess to a foolish fondness for collecting antiques, merely as a pleasure, and—I asked the old woman if I might spend the night here. To tell the truth, there seemed no alternative. It—we came much farther than I had anticipated, for I've had a consuming desire to see this place, and latterly—to see the date of this engraving. That is all."

She shook her head slightly, as though weighing him in the balance. Had he seen beneath her lashes he would have discovered a gleam of childish, gleeful mischief, but outwardly she was preternaturally grave.

"You can scarcely expect me to accept so trite a reason in the face of what I overheard your—companion say about carrying the things off." She made a gesture which relegated Marcus to the dust of the earth. "I am quite accustomed to collectors, but I admit that your methods are new"—her hand now stole toward the bell-rope—"and I fear that you must suffer the consequences of your remarkable de-

sire to look at an engraving at midnight!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Dale, with such emphasis that she did not ring; "you thought I was going to steal! Me steal! Oh, come now, that is too good!"

He laughed out, a laugh so boyish and frank that a flush rose to her face.

"I assure you," he went on, "I am quite what I represent myself to be—Oh, say, I don't quite mean that, you know!"

"No, I'm afraid the representation is a little vague. And is not the word of one who so far transgresses the laws of hospitality a rather frail bond?"

This coup, delivered with exasperating coolness, was like a douche of cold water, for the vision was only growing more alluring with each new assumption of indignation, but at her last words the eternal masculine leaped to arms.

"I assure you that I am merely a collector, and to prove it any possession with which you may be ready to part will only become mine at your own price!" he said.

She put her candle on the table between them and rested a hand on either side of it as she looked around her. A dimple lurked longingly at her mouth's corner, but she was grave.

"So—you wish my price?"

"If you will," he said coldly, thinking how exquisitely the candlelight wove a halo around her hair and against the cedar panels of the old room, and heightened the fire of indomitable spirit that lay back of her *séduisante* face.

Marcus was standing first on one foot, then on the other, in this moment of thrilling excitement, but his master waited with arms folded.

"The brass lamp," she commenced, "is ten thousand dollars."

Marcus's jaw dropped.

"The crystal clock—of course you would want that? It has but one duplicate in the world. This one is twenty thousand dollars."

Marcus's candle fell to the floor and he dived after it.

"The Roman lamp, and the side-board—notice that, please—inlaid with brass; the Florentine case beside it—observe, please—worked in with bone. Do you observe the insignia of the Medicis? It is genuine." With cool lightness she ran over each article, including the engraving, and at each named a fabulous sum. Then she leaned across the table with serious lips but dancing eyes. "I think you understand. My treasures are priceless. Shall we call the matter closed?" The Honorable Dale was writing rapidly in a small book.

"Pardon me," he said, "I was forced to take the details rapidly, but I think I have them correctly." He tore a page out and met her eyes with imperturbable coolness. "I will make out your cheque now."

"What!" The color flew from her face, leaving it white and appealing, like that of a child who plays with danger and suddenly faces undreamed-of results. "What do you mean?"

"You named your price. I accept it," he said. A thin slip of paper drifted down between them on the shining surface of the table. "Your cheque!"

For a moment the old-time clock ticked loud in protestation. Then Miss Coble gave a gasp of horror.

"You mean—you think for a moment that I would sell my inheritance? Why, I should as easily think of selling myself!"

Their eyes met warringly now, hers full of horrified amazement, his masterful with revenge.

"I am sorry that your decision comes too late to alter the validity of the sale, but I assure you that my man is quite accustomed to moving valuable articles without injuring them."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, as though stifling, "oh—" and sprang back as a second gleam appeared in the doorway and Miss Valliant's voice said:

"Eve, may I ask what you are doing here at this hour? And—why, Dale Valliant! What are you doing here?"

The Honorable Dale sprang for-

ward with an exclamation which savored of praise and thanksgiving.

"Cousin Nancy! I don't know what anyone is doing here! But will you kindly present me to this lady and assure her that I am not a burglar? Then I shall try to explain."

Miss Valliant put her glass up.

"Unless a few years have metamorphosed you, Dale, you can explain away a London fog. I supposed you were in remote climes collecting unnecessary refuse. You appear, as usual, to be officiating at a rather unique *séance*, are you not?"

"I am, I am!" The Honorable Dale spoke fervently. "I have just had the privilege of buying a few little things from this lady—"

"Buying!" Miss Valliant turned an amazed eye-glass upon the chatelaine. "Eve, it cannot be possible! My cousin, Mr. Valliant, Miss Coble."

The white figure beside her suddenly sprang to the table and seized the cheque. She tore it in two pieces, flung them down and with a whirl of white disappeared through the door. The Honorable Dale smiled a little to himself as he drew out his book and coolly wrote another.

"Will you kindly explain what this extraordinary performance means?" asked Miss Valliant resignedly.

He laughed after the manner of a boy who has discovered a treasure. "It means a cheque for one hundred and fifteen thousand dollars, which I shall ask you to hand Miss Coble in the morning."

V

"He has dared send this, and has come here again? What unwarrantable impertinence!" The chatelaine raised upon her elbow and pushed aside the white draperies of her bed, her ruffled hair and softly flushed face framing two indignant, questioning eyes.

Miss Valliant laughed a little.

"My dear, he went at once. I fully expected to hear that the remains of the two men were picked up at the bot-

tom of the cliff this morning, but it seems he had the discretion to sit on a boulder until dawn before seeking the path down the mountain. The Valliant men are prone to be masterful, Eve, and to get their own way in the end. Besides, you must admit you called him a burglar."

The chatelaine lay back, a picture of youth in a soft white frame. Her arms were thrown upward and she smiled.

"Men always think they can have their own way. Does he actually suppose I thought the cheque genuine? A young man who tramps all over the country collecting old furniture is not likely to draw up a cheque for a hundred thousand without demur. Still, I thought it decidedly rude of him to attempt chaff with a lady and a stranger." Suddenly she clapped her hands and laughed. "Oh, I have discovered a way by which to reduce him to ignominy and shame!"

Miss Valliant concealed a smile as she laid the despised cheque on the toilet table and said gravely: "He deserves to be bankrupt, my dear, and if he does not have carfare to get him back to Gotham when you are finished with him, it is his just deserts. Men can always take care of themselves, and they possess a hundred weapons for self-protection to a woman's one. The question now is: Will you see him this morning and give him the lesson in humility that he needs?"

Miss Coble sprang up, exclaiming: "I will indeed! Please ask him to wait, Nancy, and will you send Dilsy for my bath?"

Miss Valliant's irreproachable linen swept down the stairs to the hall where the Honorable Dale stood waiting; for some reason he was too restless to be seated.

"Will she see me?" he said abruptly.

"My dear Dale," Miss Valliant's glass went up as she surveyed him, "you are unnecessarily upset about a mere business matter. Why shouldn't she see you? But be prepared for an obstinacy as strong as your own. She did not intend to sell the things, but

to prove that they were above any collector's price in value to her."

The Honorable Dale smiled and looked absently into vacancy.

"Oh, I'll arrange all that. I only wanted to be sure that she will see me this morning."

It was an hour later when, hearing a door close upstairs, Miss Valliant stepped out of a vine-hung door and left the Honorable Dale standing in the hall to face the Nemesis which awaited him. Possibly a night had worked the miracle of regeneration in him, for, as he watched the slim young figure in white coming down the steps, he was only conscious of an overwhelming sensation that he was indeed a miscreant for whom no punishment were too heavy. How sweetly youthful she was, how flowerlike her slim height, how fresh her soft beauty! Did sunlight ever strike palely across so pearly a throat, such nestling rings of hair, so delicate an ear?

Suddenly, before her cool, level glance his six-feet-two of masculinity dwindled to dwarf stature.

"Your cousin says that you wish to see me about the sale of my things. It is quite unnecessary," she was saying. His quick gesture of protest caused her to look up.

"I assure you, Miss Coble, that I had no intention of pressing the sale. I am ashamed to admit that I—that I—only wished to prove to you—"

She interrupted coldly:

"Did you not send me this cheque in payment? It is hardly possible that you wish to withdraw from a sale which you pronounced valid."

"I was an ass!" he exclaimed. "The truth is, you spurred me on to prove that I—am an honest man and not—" Her slightly arched brows stopped him.

"You regret the price, perhaps? It is unfortunate that your decision comes too late to alter the validity of the sale." She quoted him mercilessly.

"Jove, no! But I appear to be more of an ass every minute! Don't you understand, Miss Coble? I am not ac-

customed to prowling around people's houses this way——"

"Oh!" she murmured with maddening incredulity.

"I own the case looks awfully rough on me, and all that, but don't you think I've been punished enough already? Of course I knew you didn't want to sell your things. I shouldn't have dared propose such a thing if—if you hadn't called me a burglar. You didn't actually think I would press this sale?" he broke off with boyish impetuosity.

She held up a slip of pink paper.

"Your cheque," she said, and holding up a second one, "my receipt."

Now the Honorable Dale may have had more experience with beasts and birds of the jungle than with women, but he held a theory that primary principles of pursuit were safe ones and could be relied upon in emergency. He suddenly drew the cheque from her fingers, tore it in two pieces and stuffed them into his pocket. As he did so his eyes held her startled ones for a moment, and as hers were withdrawn a shy color flamed under her white skin. Involuntarily her head lifted proudly and her lashes swept downward.

"Do you suppose that I would buy from you?" he said, almost harshly, "or that you will ever sell to me? Why, before I leave the mountain you will give me, of your own will, your most precious possession!"

He turned and left her. A shadow fell between her and the vines outside and the heavy brass pendulum on the landing above ticked monotonously. Without were the softly insistent summer sounds, the air dense with the odor of roses. She was only conscious of these.

When Miss Valliant entered presently she stopped at sight of the white figure, standing with a hand to its cheek and looking ahead with eyes that apparently saw nothing.

"My dear Eve, are you in a trance?" she asked.

The color came back swiftly to the girl's face.

"Your cousin—oh, I wish he had never come here! I hate him—I—I never hated anyone before!"

"Hate Dale? Hate Dale Valliant!" Miss Valliant's glass went up speculatively. "Oh, I compliment you, my dear. As far as I know, you are the only woman on earth who has ever done so."

VI

"It must be the clock," she murmured, "yet I value the Florentine chest more. He seemed to like the clock, though. He surely must know that I would never give it away."

She sat in a shadowy copse roofed by leaves and heavy with flowering grape. She was ostensibly embroidering an improbable blossom upon an unnecessary piece of lingerie. "Nancy," she said aloud, "what do you consider my most precious possession?"

"Youth and beauty; hold on to it," said Miss Valliant promptly. She was absorbed in the society column of her daily paper.

"Oh!" The other grew suddenly pink and soliloquized, "He could not have meant—how absurd! He would not dare!" And aloud, "No, I mean the things in the house, Nancy dear."

"I do not know, Eve. A collector would give his eyes for any of them. Are you contemplating another sale? I must confess that you appear to be able to oversell any collector on record!"

"Nancy, how dare you! You know perfectly well it was only my plan—to punish Mr. Valliant for his audacity! I would not sell a brick from here."

"The only marvel is that Dale did not hold you to the bargain," ruminated Miss Valliant, scanning her columns. "He is so enormously rich that it would have been the same had you named a million as your price."

"What do you mean?" The chateau's wide-open eyes were upon the speaker. "I didn't know—I never dreamed he was rich. Oh, you never told me!"

"My dear Eve, can it be possible

that you do not know of Dale Valliant's colossal fortune? Why, his name is traditional."

The chatelaine's lovely head drooped. There were hidden tears of dismay and confusion under her lashes. "I don't know very much about people, Cousin Nancy."

"You don't have to, my dear," said the other, with a sudden tone of gentleness. "You need only look at them! Yes, Dale has inherited several fortunes and made others, as a natural sequence. When he is not in Bagdad or France or in a palace in Italy or a shooting-box in England or a ducking-place in America, he is probably to be found in Wall Street or—an African jungle. Dale is like the gentleman in 'The Arabian Nights' who had a magic carpet. One can never tell whence he comes or whither he goes. Match-makers have failed so far to entrap him, but there was a Princess Voleffski, I believe——"

"Oh, I didn't know he was that sort of a person at all," interrupted the other.

"Quite that sort." Miss Valliant folded her paper as her keen eyes descried a figure in white flannels crossing the lawn behind the leaves. She took up her sunshade, adding, "I shall go to the house for a book. Do wait for me."

"Millions!" said the chatelaine to herself; "and I called him a burglar!" She sat lost in thought, watching a wren darting from thicket to thicket before her. "Yes, it must be the clock," she added irrelevantly.

She looked up to see the Honorable Dale standing beside her.

"Don't go, please, Miss Coble. I saw Cousin Nancy going to the house and came here to find you."

She leaned back helplessly. "Your assurance is past belief!" she said.

"Is it?" The Honorable balanced himself upon a precarious grapevine nearby. "Now I should call it candor. I'm rather a direct sort of person and I came all the way up the mountain to ask you something." Her

eyes looked interrogative for a second and he pursued his moment quickly. "Cousin Nancy says that you hate me. Now of course it is not surprising when one is disliked. Any man may run up against a little thing such as that. But it's so confounded odd to be hated, you know, that I—er—rather like it so far."

"Like it!" escaped her. She had a confused sensation that she was uncertain whether to go or stay, to be angry or disdainful.

"Yes, hatred is so much more pronounced and calls for action. Now in France one would call a man out, in Italy knife him, in Spain abduct him, in England ruin him politically. But a woman"—he put in his eye-glass contemplatively—"one really doesn't know exactly what to do about it, you see."

"You might return it," she suggested, recovering.

"Impossible! Would you be so good as to tell me the—er—cause of this distinct animosity?"

"Is it so extraordinary for a woman not to—to like you, Mr. Valliant?" she asked rather aimlessly.

"Heavens, no! It is perhaps the surest fate of a man who has knocked around as much as I have—a man without a home."

"According to Miss Valliant, you have more homes than most men."

"Oh, those are merely definite destinations," he said promptly. "You see, if one is in Timbuctoo or Arabia he can always run down to Ceylon to see what his native housekeeper has left him to call his own."

"But that is a shamefully wasteful way to live!" she exclaimed youthfully.

"Beastly! But a man must do something—" He was inwardly musing upon the beauty of the eyes and lips which had averred that they hated him.

"You might be doing so much good!" she said, suddenly unmindful of that hatred and speaking with a sweet earnestness. "You have the means to do so much for others. You might make them so happy——"

"Why, so I might." He dropped

his eye-glass and sprang up. "Tell me what to do and I'll go straight and do it!"

The chatelaine rose also as Miss Valliant's sunshade appeared through the leaves. "It is marvelous that a man with your experience should find no better way of employing his time than keeping up useless establishments all over the world," she said severely.

The Honorable Dale looked illuminated.

"Why, so it is! I'll telegraph one of my agents to sell out at once. Thank you so much!"

For answer the chatelaine suddenly stamped her slippered foot upon the soft turf and the light of inconsistency shone in her eyes.

"I wish you would not be so absurd! And if you wish to know why I—I dislike you, it is because I do—there!"

She went across the lawn with her head held very high, and when Miss Valliant entered the copse the Honorable Dale stood with his hat up watching her retreating figure.

"Well, Dale," said that lady, "are you posing as the Winged Mercury?"

"I am unpremeditatedly posing as a fool," he said promptly, "and I'm going to be married."

"Is it sudden?" asked Miss Valliant.

"Most inspiration is," said the Honorable conclusively.

VII

"It is very unlike Dale Valliant to waste time on an inaccessible mountain," remarked Miss Valliant a few days later. The speech was apparently irrelevant, although the smoke of an automobile had not cleared from the road beyond the hedge, where it had puffed a moment before. The chatelaine stood beside a pillar twining a rose. Now she paused, as Miss Valliant added, "He is the busiest man of leisure in the world, I fancy; and he does so much good all the time."

"Does good? He? In what way, if you please?" The chatelaine's tone held the tolerant inflection which

usually accompanied the mention of the Honorable's name. "I cannot imagine how a man who wastes his time running around the world for his own amusement, spending money on himself, can do much good for others."

Miss Valliant smiled innocently.

"My dear Eve, how did you receive so perverted a view of Dale? He does almost nothing else. He is a philanthropist as well as a beauty lover. His money has educated more than one struggling young artist who owes to Dale his future success. If he is not engrossed in his home for cripples he is endowing some other of his hobby-like charities. I assure you Dale's charities are the despair of his relations, who think that he squanders most of his fortune upon paupers."

The chatelaine interrupted breathlessly. "Oh, please call him—stop him, Cousin Nancy! I have made a mistake; there is something I must tell him at once."

Miss Valliant's glass went up.

"I thought you didn't like Dale. Really, Eve, you are becoming very changeable. There is his man, however."

It was an excited and breathless Marcus who was hobbling across the lawn. "You see, ladies," he was saying when in earshot, "there ain't no horse I can't stop, but a hortomobile is a cross 'tween a mule and a steam boiler. There ain't no breed like it for contrariness! It stopped out yonder and puffed and panted, then blowed off its rage and jumped and throwed His Honor ten feet into the air."

"Is he killed?—hurt?" cried Miss Valliant. But the chatelaine sprang past her and flew across the lawn to the hedge wicket. Outside, the Honorable Dale sat propped against a tree looking very white. He tried to rise as she ran toward him, but sank back. Then he smiled forcedly. "Most good of you, Miss Coble! But I'll be able to get along presently with Marcus's help. Beastly awkward of me to get such a throw!"

"We thought you were killed."

She found herself trembling, as she bent over him. "You must be carried up to the house."

"I'm afraid it is a little matter of a bone in the foot, or an uncommon sprain, but Marcus can mend that." He made a second effort which turned him white and the chatelaine lost no time in words.

When the Honorable Dale opened his eyes again he was being borne to the house between Marcus and Michael. They fixed him on a settle in the hall, and the chatelaine raised his head and put something to his lips. His eyes opened full upon the dark ones above them, and his head slipped comfortably back on a pillow. When she returned presently with bandages and lint he had revived sufficiently to assure her that Marcus was a better doctor of emergency than any in the profession, and must be sent down to the farmhouse for a wagon in which to convey him back.

She stood watching, however, while Marcus bandaged, and there was the warring of a lovely, if irresolute pink and white in her face. Suddenly she came nearer and spoke:

"I wish that you would stay here. We both do, don't we, Nancy? It would be much better for you. I hope that you will," she added impulsively. There must have been humor in the eyes which looked up at her, for her own fell.

"If you wish it, I will," he said. "Marcus must go down the mountain and send off several telegrams for me, however. Cousin Nancy, will you get me some blanks?"

When Miss Valliant went after the blanks he raised on his elbow. "I have some in my pocket, but I wished to speak with you. It cannot be agreeable to you, Miss Coble, to have me here, and Marcus had better return with a trap of some sort."

Step by step she had drawn nearer; now she leaned over him with the eternal motherhood of the feminine in her eyes.

"Please don't!—I've been horrid, I know! And—I am so sorry."

He put his hands out timidly. "I never knew a person less horrid. On my life! Will you?" Her hand lay in his for an instant, and something welled into his eyes, so strong yet gentle that her own drew away.

"I am glad that you will stay," she said.

The Honorable Dale leaned back smiling. The face which had leaned over him for that sweet second was so lovely.

"Here are some blanks, Dale," said Miss Valliant, entering. "Shall I send one to your fiancée?"

"My fiancée!" He laughed softly, and the chatelaine, after one startled glance, left the room.

"Yes; you told me that you are to be married," said Miss Valliant. "What is her name?"

"Her name," soliloquized the Honorable contentedly. "Jove! I've never called her by it, you know!"

VIII

It was dusk on the piazza, and one star hung jewel-like over the mountain. The Honorable Dale meditated.

"Your pardon, Mr. Dale," broke in Marcus, arriving with the mail, "but there's a whole tree of curly walnut on the other side of the mountain, going for three hundred dollars!"

"Let it go," said the Honorable. "There is nothing on the other side of the mountain, Marcus, to be compared with the treasures on this."

"Werry good, sir, but will she sell 'em?"

"She? Whom?"

"Miss Coble, sir. I own they are treasures, sir, but will she sell 'em?"

His master's lame foot came down to the porch and he sat upright. "Miss Coble part with her furniture? Are you crazy? Do not let me hear such a suggestion again!"

"Your pardon, sir. I thought you said yourself——"

"I have a right to be a fool when I choose," said the Honorable.

"Certainly, sir!" said the old man, hobbling off.

The Honorable closed his eyes and mused again.

"Evel! Could any name be so appropriate?"

"A man never appears so idiotic as when he sits and smiles at nothing," remarked Miss Valliant, who was not far away; "and don't you think that, under the circumstances, you cut the old fellow up unnecessarily?"

"Not at all. He must learn better. Marcus is a jewel, but an uncut one."

"The true jewel is indeed consistency," murmured Miss Valliant. "My dear Dale, if a few days' solitude can so pervert your naturally excellent disposition would you not better go to Monte Carlo or Bath rather than remain on a monastic mountain? As you are engaged, however, there is some excuse. Engaged men are nearly always distraught and—absorbed. I suppose it is due quite as much to the realization of Freedom's clipped wings as to the malady of love. You have been so mysterious about your fiancée, however. And as for Eve, she is quite unavailable the past few days. I might as well be in the society of two deaf-mutes. Of course, love in your case may be to blame—you are evidently absorbed with the thought of the one woman, wherever she may be."

"I am!" said the Honorable promptly. "There is but one in the world, at present. In fact, there is but one world—the place where she is at the time."

"Dear me!" Miss Valliant's glass went up in the semi-darkness. "I am surprised. Still, I suppose that at some time or other all men are alike."

"They are," agreed the Honorable. "Is that the Coble ghost down by the moon-flowers?"

"No, it is Eve. She has an unquiet way of roaming around at night. She has spent too much time here alone, and is so different from most modern girls."

"She is," he agreed.

"May I ask if your fiancée is very brown?" pursued Miss Valliant, "and does she always wear a nose-ring?"

"I have seen blacker complexions, and the last time I beheld her she did not have her nose-ring in."

Miss Valliant rose.

"I might as well go to sleep. It will at least prevent melancholia."

When she had gone he took his stick and limped down toward the dim figure visible beside the moon-flowers. The chatelaine stood with them in her arms, an embodiment of their own beauty, when he stopped before her.

"Miss Coble, I thought perhaps the moon-flowers had come to life. You have been so very good to me, but I came to tell you that I am going tomorrow," he said.

"Yes—if you must. I hope that you will be very happy." Her voice was constrained.

"You mean—" There was a slight pause, filled in by a whippoorwill's cry.

"Cousin Nancy says that you are to be married. I hope that you will be happy."

"I hope that heaven will permit it some day," he said gravely; "but I have never asked a woman to marry me."

"But you said—" She stopped.

"I have said to myself since I first saw her that I would marry her and none other. With reservations, of course. She may not want me. I'm a plain sort of man—" He paused, an overwhelming emotion sweeping over him as he watched her lovely, down-cast face. "My mind and heart were made up the first moment I saw her. Oh, tell me, is she ready to give me her most precious possession—herself?"

Her face whitened even in the starlight as she drew back.

"I do not understand—you cannot mean me when—when I said I hated you!" Her hands flew to her face as the flowers dropped to the ground, but he took them gently.

"Sweetest one, you are the only woman in the world! Send me away and you will still possess me!"

"Oh, let me think!" she whispered.

"No, do not think—come!" he pleaded, and drew her into his arms.

HER MIRROR

A CANDID friend am I
 (That creature most abhorred!),
 I never fawn and lie—
 And yet am I adored.
 Her closest confidant
 Am I, both day and night;
 Ah, many a sprig gallant
 Might envy me my right!

I, only, share her dreams—
 Those dreams none other knows.
 I also share her schemes,
 I also ken her woes.
 From me there's not a frown
 Nor secret to conceal.
 She comes in tailor-gown,
 And likewise dishabille.

"How do I look?" she asks,
 On my reply intent.
 I am not one who basks,
 Or fears she may resent.
 I purr not: "Lovely, dear!"
 But answer make, instead:
 "Your hat is on your ear;
 Your nose is shiny-red."

'Tis I she seeks, the last,
 Last thing ere tripping out.
 Toward me her eyes are cast,
 Returned from church or rout.
 I never fail to get
 Her sweetest smiles, forsooth;
 Her raptest glances; yet
 I tell her but the truth!

EDWIN L. SABIN.



CHOPPING HIM OFF

GABBLEBY—And, to make a long story short—
 GRIMSHAW—Thanks, but I know how already; I just walk off like this, as soon as it gets started.

A DEMONSTRATION IN SLOYD

By Philip Verrill Mighels

"KOSSY, there are three good and sufficient reasons why we should be married," he said, as he separated three of his fingers and held them up for the calm and beautiful Miss Stafford to see; "three reasons as plain——"

"Three?" she interrupted quietly. "Three, Bob? Indeed? And what may they be?"

"Number one is that we both need a home—a sweet, steady little home," Bob began forensically, checking off one of his digits. "And you and I could make the cleverest and brightest little home in the world. You could do whatever bits of cooking——"

Kossy patiently restrained a number of impulses, all of which, however, expressed themselves in a certain metallicism, visible on her smooth, firm countenance.

"If that is your premier reason, do not delay to amplify, but proceed with the others," she interpolated judiciously.

Bob was vaguely disquieted; he was likewise glad he had reserved his heavier artillery for concluding shots.

"Well, my first reason is logical and sound, isn't it, Kossy?" he inquired. "You'll admit my premises, as far as I've gone?"

"If your premises comprise the proverbial cottage I shall wish to have something to say when your entire argument has been submitted," she replied. "What is the second of your good and sufficient reasons?"

"Well, my second—the second is, Kossy, that I love you devotedly."

She flushed to her dainty ears, half covered by masses of seal-brown hair.

Her composure, however, was undisturbed.

He watched her narrowly. The shot, he reflected, had reached its mark.

"And—your final reason, Bob?" she queried with splendid calm.

"The third is—that you love me." He said it boldly.

Her eyes blazed for a second. He met her glance defiantly. Her gaze it was that fell. They were silent for a time that seemed to him interminable.

"Is that—is that your entire argument?" she asked, making a desperate overdraft on her show of unconcern. "Is that all that you rely on to—to alter my former decision?"

"Good gracious, Kossy, isn't that enough?" he demanded. "Could there be three reasons more cogent?"

"Let us examine them quietly and seriatim," she answered.

"Oh, bother the seriatims! That's the influence of these infernal clubs for women!" he exploded. "Love-making seriatim, according to Hoyle—or some other parliamentary idiot!"

"I beg your pardon, Bob," she corrected. "I was not making love."

"Well, I was—and you should have been! Infernal nonsense, these clubs and women's movements—ruining good old sensible notions every day. What's the matter with my reasons?"

She was still self-possessed, which Bob was not.

"That is precisely what we were about to investigate," she told him.

"According to Hoyle?"

"According to Kossy Stafford."

"Well?"

She hesitated, but recovering com-

mand of the situation faced the proposition resolutely.

"In the first place, I have no intention of abandoning my work in sloyd in favor of an attempt to bake indigestible biscuit for any man who has once had a mother whose daily achievements apotheosized everything gastronomic from hot cakes to cabbage."

"Oh," said he. Then he added: "This sloyd, I believe, achieves the apotheosis of things sawed out of wood—rolling-pins, potato-mashers, towel-racks and the like."

Her eyes blazed. "Sloyd is a science," she informed him with aggressive hauteur.

"So is brick-laying. So is digging post-holes," he retorted. "So is everything but getting married and being sensible."

By a mighty effort she continued coldly judicial.

"We were attempting to analyze and discuss your three alleged good and sufficient reasons. The first I consider untenable and, in fact, demolished."

"I don't," said Bob. "You haven't advanced a single logical argument to show that it isn't a splendid reason for our marrying."

"Didn't I say I should not abandon my work in sloyd?"

"Well, you can do your sloyd between times, in the basement—if you insist upon chopping the wood. But I thought I could do that myself to save you the labor."

"Mr. Warren, I must ask you not to be wantonly preposterous," she cautioned. "You will treat the subject of my science seriously in my presence, or not at all."

"Oh, I don't care how I treat it, I'm sure. I'll even compromise with you, Kossy. We'll let my first reason rest—not abandoned, just laid aside for the moment. But you can't get around my second. You know how devotedly I love you."

Kossy looked away and answered scholastically.

"No man who speaks so slightly—yes, even insultingly—as you have done of a serious study, a life-work

such as sloyd affords—no such man can truly love a woman who has told him how deeply her heart is in her science."

"What—nonsense!" he gasped in amazement. "Good guns! as if a man in love cares a rap about another child's play science more or less—a thing like this brainless sloyd! Why, you can sloyd all over the house, for all of me. I say I love you, Kossy—and that settles that point absolutely."

"Does it, indeed?" she inquired, arching her brows somewhat icily. "If I am unconvinced of the genuineness of your fervor how can the matter be regarded as settled?"

"Hang these schools of argument and associations for developing feminine peculiarities anyhow!" said Bob. "Let both the reasons I've advanced subsidize temporarily for the sake of the argument, if you so desire; but what will you do with the last? Kossy—you love me—and you know it!"

"In this final reason your premises are false, Mr. Warren," she informed him. "You are quite mistaken."

He looked at her blankly.

"Now see here, Kossy," he presently began, "I've given in to nearly everything you've said, but it's time to call a halt. I know better. We have loved each other for three solid months—and you love me now and that's all there is to it, and it can't be denied."

Kossy colored; her lips would fain have trembled; her eyes could not, for the life of her, meet his gaze. But she said:

"I don't. After all you've said I don't. You are quite mistaken."

Bob was exasperated. "Well, I just ain't! This is all on account of those tom-fool hammers and saws," said he, with warmth and emphasis. "By gracious! if it was any other girl on earth I'd wonder why in the dickens I would wish to marry a woman with such a lot of nonsense in her cupola."

"You need not distress yourself further with thoughts of marrying this particular woman, endowed as you have mentioned," she told him coldly.

"I wish you good afternoon."

"Oh, now look here, Kossy, I didn't mean——"

"Miss Stafford, if you please, Mr. Warren. And I prefer not to know what you think you may have meant."

"All right. Where's my hat? I won't stay where I'm not welcome," exploded Bob. "But I'll bet a dollar you'll change your mind. You love me all the same. Good-bye," and with a fine demonstration of his strength of character when he closed the gate he strode off down the road and disappeared.

Angry herself but suddenly a victim to the poignant, inconsequent alarms of her heart, Kossy finally scanned the path to the gate and the highway beyond with eyes illogically dewy.

"Oh, Bob!" she said. And she pressed her hand above her heart.

II

"But, Kossy, you don't mean you shall never, never marry?" insisted Bettie, in girlish awe. "Of course, we all say we'll never be married, and sometimes it helps to hurry proposals along; but none of us ever really means what we say."

Kossy was busy with her bright little saw, reducing the length of a long piece of wood.

"I shall never marry," she repeated. "We girls will be perfectly comfortable here, and I shall lead the life of science to which I am devoted and which I much prefer."

"Oh, I know it's real cute to live like this," agreed Bettie; "but—I don't know."

Kossy assaulted her sawed-off piece of wood with a plane which had a perfectly detestable habit of clogging up with dirty little splinters. Bettie watched with admiration for a moment, after which she added:

"Shall you make all your own furniture?"

"Probably."

"What is this that you're making now?"

"A table for our living-room."

"You're awfully clever, Kossy, and I can't do a thing in the world," sighed poor Bettie. "That's why I'm going to be married. Who does the cooking here?"

"I have had to do it so far," Kossy confessed. "I made some rolls for breakfast."

"Not that one could really eat?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, my, it must feel funny to be so clever!" Bettie sighed again. "It's the sweetest little cottage I ever saw—the sort you think about when you read about love—and so forth." She watched the disciple of sloyd, now at work with a draw-knife, in despair of getting service from the plane, and was presently aware that Kossy was disturbed.

"Anything wrong?" she inquired.

"No—it's all right, practically. I hadn't intended—the draw-knife cut a little too—the wood split. It's very difficult and unsatisfactory wood to handle."

"What part of the table is that piece?"

"It's a leg."

"Oh! Well—couldn't you put that leg on the back part of the table, where it wouldn't show?"

"Yes—oh, yes. It doesn't make any practical difference." She dragged a second length of the lumber across her bench and began sawing it off in masterly style.

During this period of industrial disturbance the door was opened and in there came another young woman—one of the partners in the cottage—whose tiny thumb-end of a nose was clutched in the grip of a pair of glasses of the most intellectual aspect. She and Bettie exchanged greetings and together watched the demonstration in sloyd.

"I wonder if I allowed for the two inches over," mused the carpenter aloud when at length she had severed the timber.

She measured the leg by its predecessor. Even Bettie and the girl with the intellectual aspect saw that the "two inches over" had been forgotten. Kossy looked at the thing in silence.

"I don't see why any harm has been done," said the girl with glasses. "You can use that leg on the back of the table as well as not. No one will ever be the wiser."

"Oh, it doesn't really matter," Kossy agreed; "but it annoys me to make such a blunder."

Then the talk went on and the work continued till presently two more bachelor girls had come to the workshop and a third of the legs for the table had been evolved from the raw material.

An ominous silence fell upon the assembled young women when Kossy paused, so obviously concerned over that third leg.

"You haven't forgotten the two inches over, have you, dear?" asked poor Bettie in sympathetic agony.

"No," answered Kossy. "I haven't. It's long enough, but—"

"Oh, I guess it's all right," said the intellectual-appearing partner, reassuringly.

"You see, I taper them down," explained the worker in sloyd, "in order to make them graceful."

"Isn't that clever!"

"I don't see how she ever does it in the world."

"But," resumed Kossy, "I—I've turned this one over and tapered it the wrong way of my piece."

"Well, we don't care," asserted one of the newcomers. "Just put that leg on the hind part of the table and let it go at that."

"Why, yes," said the second newcomer. "I'm sure it will never be noticed."

Poor Bettie and the girl with glasses began to wonder how many rear sides the table was to have, but they made no comments.

To redeem her reputation for skill Kossy proceeded with vigor to finish the fourth of the legs. The top and several other parts of the table were already cut and finished. Therefore all the young women were finally brought into requisition, and with Kossy to pound in the nails the new piece of furniture began to assume both form and dimensions.

It was all put together at last and there it stood—on three of its legs. The fourth was aloof from the floor for the matter of an inch.

"Of course it won't wobble or creak when it's quite finished?" said the girl of the intellectual cast of glasses.

"Oh, no, I have only just assembled the parts," said Kossy, sucking at a wounded thumb which the hammer had bruised. "I'll make it sufficiently strong."

"And people always have to put a book or something under one leg," consoled Bettie.

"W-e-l-l—not when a table is properly finished," corrected Kossy. "I made it tall purposely so I could saw off the legs afterward and get them all of a length."

"What a perfectly clever ideal!" ejaculated one of the bachelors.

"Oh, you know sloyd is *the* thing," informed another. "It goes 'way beyond mere carpenter work. It's a science."

Kossy, meantime, with the aid of Bettie, was turning the table on its side. She then proceeded to measure, square and mark, after which her bright little saw bit off the ends of the three long legs.

When the thing was erected once again, however, it stood in a horribly distracting manner, for its two front legs were taller than the others, and one of the pair on the farther side was at disagreements with its neighbor.

The girls were speechless. Kossy felt her heart begin to sink.

"It's good enough for anyone's living-room," championed one of the girls at last.

"It's so strong and—so clever," assented Bettie.

"We can lean it against the wall—in fact, we shall gain in space that way," said the girl with glasses.

"The—the trouble must be with the unlevel floor of this room," Kossy faltered. "I shouldn't have cut it till we had tried it where it will stand when finished."

"Let's take it in there now."

So in it was carried—and still it stood peculiarly.

"Now I can see exactly how much to cut off from the front ones," asserted the worker in sloyd.

Thereupon the table was turned once more upon its side for further surgical operations.

But Kossy could not have been accustomed to fitting tables to that particular floor, for the wretched construction, when once more placed upon its feet, teetered between two equally distressing attitudes of inebriety.

"And I can't cut it off any more," almost sobbed the carpenter.

"I don't know, dear; it would make a lovely bench," said Bettie.

"It's a good, substantial work-table now," asserted another stoutly. "We shall need something in the back room anyway."

This was the last straw. Kossy felt she should certainly go mad if she stopped in the house another minute.

"I—I've got such a headache, I—shouldn't have tried to—put it together this morning," she faltered. "I'm—going out. I promised to call on my Aunt Matilda this afternoon. Good-bye," and fleeing to her room to get her hat she escaped at the rear of the cottage and ran from the place at the top of her speed.

III

THE girl with the glasses of intellectual aspect was the only one remaining in the house when big Bob Warren came along to make a call.

"Hullo, Carrie," said he. "I just dropped in to see how the bachelor hall is progressing."

"Oh, Bob," said Carrie, who had known him all her life, "we haven't been happy here today at all."

"What's the trouble?"

She pointed to the table, which was apparently leering at everything decorous in the apartment.

"Poor Kossy had such a perfectly heart-breaking time with that," she

imparted, and the whole of the story was soon related.

"H'm," said Bob, reflecting for a moment to himself. Then he turned about.

"See here, Carrie," broke from him suddenly, "I want you to leave me alone with this table for just about twenty-five minutes. Comprehend?"

"You won't smash it up?" said Carrie.

"Not precisely. Kossy's tools in here?" With the table in his possession he went, as if by instinct, to the workshop and closed the door.

"Poor little girl!" he murmured, as he drove the bright little saw that now was rasping a mere wafer from one of the uneven legs.

"Poor little girl!" he said again, as he leveled the thing at length on its pins, straight and true.

"Poor little girl!" he repeated, as he drove in nails and shaved down the legs to a symmetry and uniformity impeccable.

Then when he thumped the thing down in its place on the carpet of the living-room the mastered boards and lengths of lumber shivered obediently and looked so much more than merely respectable as to appear positively attractive.

"Oh, Bob!" cried Carrie, "what in the world did you do to make it so beautiful?"

"Nothing. I gave it a shaking, that's all. Can you see that I've altered the thing at any point?"

"Why—no, but of course——"

"Of course nothing! When Kossy comes you'll tell her simply that it must have settled—like a house. Comprehend?"

And this was done.

But the mother of a child knoweth every freckle, mole and wart upon her brat. Kossy rubbed her eyes when she rested her gaze once more upon the demonstration in sloyd, and while, for a second, she was almost deceived into thinking her work had turned out better than it had promised earlier, yet she missed certain hideousities that made it hers.

She went to the workshop. Sure enough, there on the floor were extra shavings, extra wafers of wood, extra sawdust. And did she not know her own shavings almost to the individual curlycues of fibre? Then her gaze fell upon a crumpled hummock of linen—a handkerchief with which Bob Warren had swabbed his wetted brow.

Something told her before she picked it up that she knew its kind. Then the generous "B," which she herself had worked upon it in snow-white silk, stretched mutely between her fingers.

It was nearly dusk when Bettie, having returned once more to the cottage, stood before the table giving expression to wonder of a description most extravagant.

"To think it could settle like that!" she repeated for the seventeenth time.

"Why, it's perfectly heavenly—back part and all! Kossy, how did it really happen?"

"Oh, tables are just like girls, I suppose," said Kossy, turning away a face suspiciously flushing. "They seem to change their minds."

"Why? You haven't been changing your mind about anything, Kossy?"

"I don't know," confessed the carpenter. "I—don't you think a girl—anyone—is likely to—be the first one caught if—she says she will never—you know—never be married?"

"Kossy! Then you have changed your mind? Not really? Are you really and truly going to marry Bob?"

Kossy blushed—exultantly. She suddenly caught the astounded Bettie in her arms and gave her a wonderful kiss.



THE LAST MAN

IT being ascertained that there was in the whole country a citizen in hiding who had boasted in an idle moment that he had never applied for a pension, a body of patriots started out in search of him.

When finally apprehended, the man appeared dogged and defiant.

"I am the possessor," he declared, "of a robust constitution, and none of my ancestors, so far as I know, ever took part in the War of the Rebellion. Why should I rob the public treasury?"

"And is this," exclaimed the head of the party, "your only excuse? Have you no regard, sir, for the customs and traditions of your sacred land? Don't you know that for years every lawyer and every political party in the country, from motives of pure patriotism, has labored to get every man, woman and child on the pension list?"

The culprit hung his head in shame as the full enormity of his offense burst upon him.

"Now that I recall the fact," he observed with a cunning smile, "my third great-aunt on my mother's side had a stepfather who caught the grip while shingling a house on the outskirts of the Battle of Gettysburg."

"We thought as much," exclaimed the crowd triumphantly, hurrying him on to Washington.



ONE ADVANTAGE

ADA—It must be nice to have money.

IDA—Yes. It relieves one from the temptation to marry it.

IDEALISM AND REALISM

By T. Harrington Price

WHAT THE BOOK SAYS

REGINALD WESTERFIELD paused in the Vere de Vere drawing-room, anxiously awaiting the moment when he could speak his heart to the beauteous Constance.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

Bill Smith waited a moment outside Maggie Brown's house, dusted his clothes, inspected his five-cent shine, pasted down his hair and exclaimed: "Gee whiz! what'll I say to Maggie?"

THE BOOK

With a rustle of silk Constance Vere de Vere swept into the room. She graciously extended her hand to Reginald, who bowed over it with true Westerfieldian courtliness. "Ah, my lady," sighed he, "greeting from your humble servant." She smiled charmingly.

THE REALITY

Maggie Brown was sitting cross-legged, playing "Hiawatha," when Bill Smith walked in. She swung around to see who it was. "How d'y'do, Bill?" said she. "How d'y'do, Maggie?" said he. "Sit down, Bill," said she. Bill sat gingerly on the edge of a chair. Both looked uncomfortable.

THE BOOK

"You are a vision of loveliness tonight," he burst forth impressively, entranced by her beauty and intoxicated by her presence. She dimpled bewitchingly. "Ah," quoth she, "'men were deceivers ever.' 'Flattery, flattery, thy name is man!'"

THE REALITY

Bill broke the silence. "Ye're lookin' pretty nifty tonight, Maggie," he said. "Ah, g'on, Bill," said she; "you're only jollyin' like the rest of 'em."

THE BOOK

In his agony of delight and love Reginald observed not her pleasantry. "Loveliest of your sex!" he cried, sinking on his knees before her, "I have long awaited the moment when I might pour forth my heart to you and tell of the passion that is consuming it. I love you, Constance. Can you, oh, my love, consent to be mistress of the Westerfield mansion and make me the happiest of men?"

THE SMART SET

THE REALITY

Bill moved his chair closer. "No, I ain't jollyin', either," said he, putting his arms around her. "You're a corkin' girl, Maggie, and I like you mighty well. Just say the word and I'll make you Mrs. Smith."

THE BOOK

The beautiful eyes of Constance Vere de Vere drooped before his ardent gaze; her lovely head fell and her sweet lips breathed forth an almost inaudible "Yes."

THE REALITY

Maggie Brown giggled: "I thought you'd never pop the question, Bill. But it's all right. Sure I'll marry you."

THE BOOK

Reginald arose. "Beauteous creature," he cried, "my cup of happiness is filled to overflowing. As the French hath it, '*Rien ne reste de mon cœur, l'amour ôté.*'" Then, placing his arms around her, he imprinted a betrothal kiss upon her alabaster brow.

THE REALITY

"We'll have a swell weddin', Maggie," said Bill. "As the Irishman says, 'Begor, there are two times to have a racket—at yer weddin' and yer wake.'" So saying, he favored Maggie with another hug.



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

SAID Mother Eve complainingly:
 "Adam, the years are long,
 And married life, it seems to me,
 Is not one grand, sweet song."

Said he, as his mustache he twirled,
 "There's none I love like thee,
 Where'er I go, in all the world
 There's just one girl for me."

"Aye, there's the rub; you're not unkind,
 Nor do I ever doubt your love,
 But this is always on my mind—
 There's no one to be jealous of!"

WILLIAM OSMOND CONE.

THE DOING AND THE UNDOING

By Jane Findlay Evans

IT was the night before the wedding, and Angelica North was awaiting the last visit of the bridegroom before she should be his. It was a chilly November evening, and the rain was hammering against the closed shutters. The two large drawing-rooms, built in the fashion of forty years ago, were usually rather overcrowded with flowers and bibelots, but now they were already cleared for the festivities of the morrow.

She paused by the mantel to look at her reflection in the glass. She seemed never before to have realized her beauty, though she would always have said, perhaps, that it was the most valuable of a good many blessings which a partial Providence had bestowed upon her. But now—it was what Stephen loved her for! She looked with careful approval at the elaborately waved and braided chestnut hair, and at the eyes which Nature gives only with such hair—warm, red-brown, with little dark spots and golden lights. But as she tiptoed and leaned forward, the better to see herself in the high glass, it was at something which might be regarded as a defect that she looked with the greatest interest and even satisfaction—a little group of freckles on her faultless nose and over the upper part of her firm, pale cheeks. For there is something about freckles that suggests youth; and this bride was thirty-six years old, and the man she was to marry on the morrow just ten years younger.

Yet she was not going to the altar without the conscientiously expressed remonstrances of a particularly large circle of friends and relatives. From

the general point of view, there was everything to be said against, and nothing for, a second marriage on the part of Mrs. North. If she must marry again, her friends were unanimous in the opinion that it should be someone who would be "a father to Alan," her son. But Angelica North believed that, having provided Alan with one excellent father, whom Providence in His wisdom had seen fit to remove, she was under no obligation to furnish him with another. He was already sixteen years old, and had spent two years at school at a distance from his mother. At his majority he would have an independent fortune, and even now could in no sense be considered a child.

This evening, mingled with thoughts of her young lover, came recollections of the eve of her first marriage. That had been very different. She almost realized—not quite!—that her present rapture would have been more appropriate then, when in reality her thoughts had been mostly of herself as the centre of a spectacular entertainment. And the spectators to-morrow would be the same, with such exceptions as the thinning out of seventeen years had made.

She had cared gently for that first bridegroom. Indeed, he was her kinsman in a close degree. He had always been an important part of her life, and she had been engaged to him from her earliest youth. She would even have told you then that she was marrying for love; but it seemed to her now in her maturity that she could have known little of the potentialities of love in that sheltered youth, which had

been passed under the restraining influences of an English governess at home, until, orphaned at fifteen, she had been placed in a French convent, where the existence of the other sex was not recognized. At that age, Byron to the contrary notwithstanding, the passion is usually for something abstract and half comprehended rather than for the being who is supposed to inspire it.

There are many small cities in our country where most of those who constitute the substance and influence of the community are related by ties of blood. Such a town, of universal cousinship, was Tonowomba, where Angelica North had spent the greater part of her life. She had never had serious cause to deplore this state of society until she announced her intention of marrying Stephen Thorpe. Then she was called upon to renounce or excuse her determination by numbers of persons, whose interest in the matter she regarded as sheer impertinence. She had no explanation to offer, except that she was in love with him—which would have been accepted as sufficient had she been ten or fifteen years younger.

At last the expected ring at the doorbell was heard—hurried, feverish; and then the sound of his step on the stairs came so promptly that the watcher knew that the eager lover had worn no greatcoat to protect him from the November storm. The grinning servant who admitted him remained below, so he burst into the presence of his beloved alone. The hair clung damply to his temples and the shoulder against which he pressed her cheek was wet. Words of solicitude trembled on her lips, but she suppressed them. She must not exhibit an anxiety which savored of the maternal. But she gently released herself from his embrace and drew him to the fire.

"My dear boy," she said, after a few minutes of silent rapture, "what do you suppose people thought when they saw you running through the streets this horrible night without an overcoat! Did you perhaps wear a hat?"

"Oh, I believe so! What does it matter? Those fools kept me so long—I thought they would never let me off! Angel, I have an idea, a really luminous one. Let us go off now, this minute, and be married! There's an old army chaplain at the hotel who'd be glad to do it, and think what fun it would be to cheat the wedding guests out of the show! And I should have you twelve whole hours sooner!"

She laughed, but tenderly, and pressed her fingers on the throbbing veins in his temples—her favorite caress.

"Oh, Stephen, you must try to be grown-up! Haven't you ever heard that women marry for the wedding? And ours is going to be such a fine one!"

"Don't laugh now, Angel—I can't stand it. Kiss me, kiss me!"

The front door opened and closed again with a bang. Heavy steps were heard mounting the stairs. The tread was rather deliberately noisy, and Angelica thought she detected the intention of warning the lovers of an intrusion. When the door opened and Alan entered she was seated, radiant but calm, and Stephen was leaning against the mantel at some distance from her.

"Good evening, mother," he said quietly. Stephen winced. "How are you, Mr. Thorpe?"

Stephen turned and they shook hands.

Alan North's figure had a breadth and his face a maturity which seemed beyond his sixteen years. There was even a little prophetic down on his lips. He had been a beautiful child and might be a handsome man; but just now his features were heavy and his feet and hands unnaturally large. His voice was already that of a man. He had begun early to take life seriously. His mother did not realize the depth of feeling which made her coming marriage something like a tragedy to him. With him it was not only a retrospective jealousy on behalf of his dead father, of whom he had been passionately fond, but a realization of the unwisdom of such a step. There had been considerable difference in age be-

tween Alan's father and Angelica, and as she had known him from infancy perhaps her marriage was a little commonplace; but she had little taste for the uncommon. Ample means, a luxurious home, some travel, the decorous admiration which her beauty had always excited—these things had filled her life until two years ago, when she had first seen the man whom tomorrow she was to wed. She was of a placid temper. The ordinary sentiments of wifely and motherly love she had felt to a normal degree. At that time no illness or danger to husband or child had ever occurred to arouse a fiercer feeling.

She had returned to Tonowomba after nearly a year's absence abroad with her husband, during which time the battery of artillery which for many years had garrisoned the little fort at the edge of the town had been replaced by three troops of cavalry fresh from the frontier. With them was Stephen Thorpe, a second lieutenant, who had known but a couple of years of service.

Now, on the eve of her marriage with him, she did not care to think too much of the months which followed their first meeting. Her matronly calm had been stirred, her woman's heart thrilled, for the first time. As for Lieutenant Thorpe, it had seemed at first, when he had learned to know the only desirable woman on earth, and she was an unassailable wife and mother, with a pure pedigree and a large fortune, that the gods who had hitherto fought on his side had turned their faces from him. He had nothing but rejoicing then for the turn of Fate which suddenly made Angelica North a widow, and he scarcely allowed a decent interval to elapse before telling her so—in more discreet language.

Perhaps an intimate knowledge of Stephen Thorpe's career from the cradle to the altar would not have been reassuring to one about to swear love, honor and obedience, and hoping to spend the rest of her days at his side. Not that anything especially discreditable lay behind him, but the potentialities of his temperament were dan-

gerous. He was a spoiled child. He would have said that his life had been punctuated by tragedies; but, as a matter of fact, he had reached manhood without a wish of his being long ungratified, and had come instinctively to expect all things to bend to his behest.

His father, a man of considerable fortune and some eminence, had died while occupying the position of United States Minister at one of the minor European courts, while Stephen, who was born abroad, was still little more than an infant. He was a very beautiful child, of delicate constitution, and his mother was absolutely fitted to bring out what was worst in this rather unfortunate combination. He was the youngest and only surviving one of five children, and to keep him in the world at all was her one thought. He lived abroad until his tenth year, being dragged from one resort and "cure" to another, when what he really needed was a quiet nursery and an occasional spanking. Before he had cut his first tooth he had learned the efficacy of holding his breath as a means of having his wishes immediately regarded. Later, screaming fits which raised his temperature to a degree which his mother considered dangerous were equally effectual. Happily he was not a boy of a naturally violent temper, and he early perceived that much could be accomplished by his beauty and the charm of manner which he exercised even when very young. When he was ten years old his mother saw fit to bring him to America, to prepare him for becoming ultimately President of the United States. Even to her partiality it seemed that an idiomatic and colloquial acquaintance with the English tongue might be regarded as next door to indispensable in that office. His father had been a lawyer, but Stephen's European experiences had planted in his infant breast the conviction that the profession of arms was the only one which became a gentleman. It was not until he had lived for some years in his native land

that he came to a realization of the fact that service under a republic of the nature of ours is not identical with that where the armies are officered by the hereditary lords of the soil. Still, he sought and obtained an appointment to West Point, and, thanks to a facility for "cramming," entered, the youngest of his class.

His career there was somewhat stormy. He maintained a fair standing in his class, but in matters of discipline was deplorably derelict. A crisis came in which several ladies of varying social position were involved, and it is quite sure that Mr. Thorpe's connection with the Military Academy, and perhaps with the service of the United States, would have closed ignominiously if his usual luck had not interfered by striking him low with pneumonia about twelve hours before the damning charges were to be laid before the authorities. The doctors at once pronounced his case hopeless; and, as it would have seemed inhuman to prefer charges against a dying boy, they were allowed to lapse. He lay for a long time in the hospital, in great danger and considerable pain, his mother in attendance.

In the meantime the various officers' wives and daughters and the visiting girls, who had always adhered to his cause, showered attentions upon him. By the time he had been removed, convalescent, to New York, the sternest martinet was not disposed to demur at accepting his resignation from the corps of cadets, on the ground of physical disability.

Six months passed before he was completely restored to health. During this time, however, all the arrangements had been made, through the political friends of his family, to procure him a commission in the army from civil life. By the time he was sufficiently strong to buckle on a sword the sword was there. He was a full-fledged lieutenant nearly two years before his classmates would graduate.

Women had played a not unimportant part in the drama of his life. It

was while still suffering under the really crushing blow of his mother's death that he first met Mrs. North; and it was while administering consolation of a maternal character that she discovered a part of her being hitherto unexplored and undivined, and that Thorpe was shaken by a passion which in no way resembled any feeling that had briefly held him. They parted; and after Thorpe had joined his new regiment in Arizona Angelica took to good works—not as a matter of expiation, for, as I have said, they had parted in time for the woman, who was a good woman, to be spared regrets, and for the man, who was not good, to be consumed with all regret. And then, before the lines in her face had had time to grow hazy in his remembrance, Providence again stepped in and killed Mr. North, whom Thorpe had always detested. And now at last,

The grapes were glowing on the vine,
For Love's own hand to take,

and he was about to press them to his lips.

As Alan drew up a chair Thorpe turned his back upon him, as an excuse lifting one damp foot after the other to the blaze in the chimney. He was physically and mentally nervous and irritable, and every word and movement of the boy caused him a sensation which amounted to pain. He would have been glad of an excuse for open hostility, but Alan exhibited toward him an unvarying politeness, though it was untinted by cordiality.

"Where have you been, dear?" the mother asked.

"Don't you remember, mother? I have been at Douglas's birthday dinner."

The boy smothered all signs of the pain clutching at his throat. That she should forget that celebration of his dearest friend and schoolmate, so long talked of!

"Why, of course, darling—how stupid of me!" She took her son's hand in both of hers and patted it a little absently.

In a moment the boy bent down, kissed his mother's cheek and said good night to both of them.

"Stephen!"

The face Thorpe turned to her was startlingly pale. He was always at the mercy of his emotions.

"Why, dear, what is it?" she said, laying her hand on his shoulder. He shook it off.

"Don't call me *dear* in the same tone you just used to that—that——"

"Stephen!" she interrupted, herself shaken by his excitement. She sank into her chair again, and he turned and threw himself at her feet, burying his face in her dress. She leaned her cheek down to him. She put her arms about his shoulders, which were heaving with something like sobs, and crooned to him in a wordless voice. He grew quieter and drew her hand to his lips.

"I don't believe he can be yours," he murmured.

"Never mind, my own sweetheart—I am yours." And she soothed him with tenderest caresses. She had always entertained a well-balanced contempt for anything hysterical, even in a woman, and yet a calmer Stephen would not have been so dear to her.

II

FIVE years had passed since the marriage which had seemed even more of a lottery than is usual in such a contract—a sufficient time to decide the question of its success.

Contrary to the expectation quite generally expressed by their friends, the difference in the ages of husband and wife was less to be remarked than at the time of their marriage. Angelica had changed but little. Thorpe, on the other hand, looked older than his years. There were vertical lines between his brows, and his olive skin had taken on a somewhat sallow tinge. The hair on his temples, too, was noticeably gray. He looked a little worn and very discontented. He had had no tangible quarrel with existence, but

events did not move rapidly enough for him. There had been alternations of service and leave, the latter spent in rather riotous living, the field service performed with fervid enthusiasm, the garrison duty with languid perfunctoriness. There was seldom any domestic friction. Angelica's household machinery was never allowed to creak.

The end of the first year had brought them a daughter, rapturously received by the father, until he remembered that his wife had borne a son to another man. This constituted a distinct grievance, which faded, however, with the rapture, when the baby ceased to be a new toy.

But as a soldier Captain Thorpe—he had won rapid promotion—felt himself to be a victim of cruel circumstances. In the first place, his regiment had not been ordered to Cuba for the war with Spain. That had made existence well-nigh intolerable to him and likewise to his friends, for Thorpe was not one to suffer in silence. He had chafed, raved, worn out the patience of the War Department in his efforts for transfer, exchange or a volunteer commission. But Captain Thorpe was not popular with the War Department.

When the brief campaign was over there were few survivors who were more sick or sorry from the hardships of it than was poor Stephen, in whose ears the oft-repeated names of Santiago and San Juan Hill made a hideous din. Then came partial compensation in the orders sending his regiment to the Philippines. But it seemed that he could taste no cup without an infusion of bitterness, and the drop of gall that now poisoned his drink was the fact that Alan North, a mere boy in years, and totally without military experience, had, apparently without serious exertion, obtained a majority in a volunteer regiment, and preceded that seasoned warrior, his stepfather, to Manila.

Angelica, who was not enthusiastic about the profession of arms, was somewhat displeased with Alan for adopting it, even temporarily, and without con-

sulting her, especially as it so fretted Thorpe. She pointed out to her husband, however, that Alan had probably not followed his course exclusively with the idea of making him wretched. But Stephen was tormented by the remote contingency that, under certain crucial circumstances which he pictured, the two regiments, regular and "Mex.," would be together, and that he would be subject to the commands of Alan; and Alan's mother, blameless as she was, came in for a share of his resentment.

Stephen had now been in the Philippines for four months, and had seen some service in Northern Luzon. Alan's regiment was stationed on one of the southern islands, and there seemed no prospect of Stephen's fears being realized. Angelica did not accompany him to Manila, but, with her four-year-old daughter, followed him on a liner, having lingered for some weeks in China.

She had landed the day before, and they were at tiffin in the dining-room of the Oriente Hotel. Stephen was temporarily in Manila on a court-martial, and so had been enabled to meet his wife. Her presence was an unmixed pleasure to him. He was very sure of her sympathy and tenderness, and he had discerned symptoms of weariness on the part of his brother officers under the oft-told tale of his grievances. He had spent the better part of the night in pouring them into Angelica's ear and her interest had never flagged.

She had been, truth to tell, somewhat shocked at her husband's appearance. He had had no illness, but his life in the province which his regiment was actively pacifying had been rough and hard, and his career in Manila was not exactly in the nature of rest. The restraints of a home, were they to be obtained, would certainly be beneficial to him.

Angelica had carefully refrained from all mention of Alan until now, when, having something necessary and possibly unpleasant to communicate, the moment seemed favorable. They were

alone at a table in the corner of the dining-room. A punkah was waving gently above them. The execrable meal before them was made possible by a well-cooled bottle of champagne. The clink of ice was music to the man who set much store by luxuries and had been for months cut off from them. His court had adjourned for the day. He had just enjoyed a cold shower-bath and was clad in a crisp, white duck uniform. His wife opposite to him was most pleasing to the eye in elaborate frills of diaphanous white. There were a dozen or more persons scattered about the room whom he was pleased to see, having grown murderously tired of his own regimental messmates. His child, whose appearance was esthetically gratifying, was chattering sweetly with her Chinese nurse in the corridor without. Undoubtedly life looked better worth living than for some time past.

They had lunched as elaborately as the menu admitted, and Stephen was lingering over coffee and cognac and a cigarette before Angelica could make up her mind to disturb his enjoyment by the introduction of her son's name.

"I had a long letter from Alan at Hong Kong," she said.

He made an impatient movement. "Any more promotion? Is he perhaps expecting to be one of the new batch of generals?"

She laughed indulgently. "No—unless you regard it as promotion to become a married man."

"Married! You don't mean to say he has taken unto himself a Filipino bride?"

"Stephen!"

"No, of course not—Alan is not an impetuous youth. But who is the favored one?"

She ignored the offensiveness of his tone while she hesitated a moment before replying.

"Camilla Arden," she said slowly.

"Camilla Arden! Oh, by Jove!"

He dropped his unconsumed cigarette into his unfinished coffee and pushed back his chair.

"Impossible!"

"Strange as it may seem, I don't

think Alan is a person to make such an announcement without absolute certainty. Besides, I have had a letter from—from Miss Arden."

"Oh, by Jove!" he repeated. "I should like to see that letter," he added, with lively interest.

"I regarded it as confidential and destroyed it," she answered rather coldly.

"But why, why should Camilla Arden want to marry Alan?" he said, with a rather brutal disregard of the fact that he was talking to Alan's mother.

"You forget that Alan is—has a great deal of money," she rejoined. "And really, Stephen, I think more people would be inclined to ask why Alan should want to marry Camilla Arden, in view of—well, her previous career. I am not pleased, but you know I never attempt the impossible, and Alan is not easily influenced."

Thorpe was musing, apparently, without attending very closely to his wife's remarks.

"With Miss Arden there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," he observed, smiling.

"Yes, I remember both the English peer and the Hungarian tenor," she said sharply. "So do others—which fact enhances Alan's value." Her unusual acrimony arrested Stephen's attention.

"She is older than Alan—much older," he said.

"We are the last who ought to cavil at that," she said. "Probably our example determined them."

Stephen uttered one of his sweetest laughs.

"Are you trying to scratch and bite, Angelica? Don't, please, dear—it's not your way. Poor little Camilla!"

"Why poor?—and she is certainly not little."

"When did you know her?" asked Thorpe rather sharply.

"Oh, we crossed to Bremen once together, years ago, when she was scarcely grown up. She was very seasick and very disagreeable to her mother."

"Well, I can sympathize with her there," said Stephen, who was not a good sailor.

"Since we are comparing reminiscences of my future daughter-in-law, you might tell me your experience. I am not sensitive—yet."

"God forbid!" he exclaimed with an impatient movement, giving an order to a passing servant.

"What do you mean, Stephen? When did you know her?"

"Oh, I knew her when we were children," said Thorpe. "We spent a winter at the same hotel in Cairo, when I was ten and Camilla about six. Yes, I think there was about four years' difference between us."

"Probably the same difference still exists," she remarked drily.

"I doubt it!" he laughed. He had rolled another cigarette and sent for another cup of coffee. "It is probably much greater now."

"You have known her since?"

He hesitated a moment. "Yes," he answered.

"Well?"

"Sufficiently well to conclude that the head on Alan's young shoulders is not so inappropriately old as I had imagined."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing," he said impatiently. "Even Alan must know that his fiancée has been—well, not without experiences, considering how the newspapers have exploited her. I—admire her," he broke off with a laugh.

"I haven't told you the worst," she said. "That girl is on a trip round the world with the Blairs. They are in Japan now. I am supplied with the address of her Tokio bankers and Alan has persuaded her to promise to come here. He hopes to get a leave or temporary duty in Manila, and he expects me to shelter and chaperon her. The Blairs are not coming here."

Stephen flushed angrily. "Very insolent of Alan, I think."

"You must remember, Stephen, Alan has asked very little of me since—"

"Oh, I know!" he interrupted im-

patiently. "What are you going to do?"

"I wrote Alan that I must first see about getting a house here, and if I succeeded I should do as he wished. One might as well make a virtue of necessity, you know."

"You said nothing of consulting me, I suppose?"

"When I wrote I hardly hoped to see you so soon, and as you are to be here so short a time I can't see what difference it makes to you, anyhow."

"Oh, very well," he said, rising. "After all, I suppose I must regard myself as an outsider when it is a question as to what you and Alan wish."

III

ANGELICA was fortunate in the matter of a house, always a difficult question in Manila. A staff officer of considerable rank was unexpectedly ordered to America, and the Thorpes secured his quarters, which had previously belonged to the Government—a large and airy house in the Ermita district, on one of the little streets parallel to the sea, set in the midst of a typical tropical garden, with a balcony hanging over the water—a rare and delightful feature.

While Thorpe was alternately rejoicing in it and bewailing the fate which would shortly take him back to the provinces, the day came of Miss Arden's expected arrival. Alan had failed to get a leave, and indeed had withdrawn the request in view of a recent outbreak among the natives with whom he was stationed; so it fell to Captain Thorpe's lot to meet his stepson's fiancée.

The Hong Kong steamer on which she was to arrive was anchored some distance out in the bay; but although the launch upon which Stephen approached it was small, the sea rough and he but an indifferent sailor, his most vivid thoughts were not of today. They leaped back over the years of chances and changes to the time when he had last known Camilla

Arden, when he and she were both young—pathetically young, it seemed to him now—and when for a while they had played not unimportant parts in each other's lives. Then, they had parted not as friends. She had lied to him, beyond doubt, he reflected; and though Thorpe, in his sentimental relations, was quite capable of juggling with the truth, he exacted the most limpid candor from the women whom he honored with his admiration.

As he drew near the steamer he brought his errant thoughts back to the present, and chuckled a little at the idea of the stolid Alan fancying he could anchor down this butterfly. He hoped she would lead him a dance. Her reasons for wanting to marry the young man were obvious enough. He did not blame her. But he considered it distinctly indelicate on her part to force relations with himself and his wife. Still, he was tingling with curiosity when he caught the first glimpse of her leaning over the rail.

It was very unmistakably she and so little changed that the sight of her gave him an odd shock. He was too accustomed to his own acknowledged beauty ever to have given much thought to it; but at the sight of this woman who had known him, and possibly cared for him, in his young perfection he felt the weight of the years which had lined his face and frosted his temples. Would she recognize him? Even her dress—and Stephen noticed such things—was characteristic of the Camilla he had known. She was in blue linen, fresh and cool, with much filmy embroidery, distinctly unseaworthy, and a hat and parasol of white chiffon. He had crossed the Atlantic with her once, and remembered the serene indifference she had shown as to the proper attire for the sea, to whose fashions she was certainly accustomed. Indeed, he could not remember ever to have seen her clad in what might be called a practical manner. Her shoes had always been the reverse of "common sense," her skirts long and com-

plicated, very diaphanous in the summer and very velvety and furry in the winter.

She was gazing rather anxiously at the faces which were crowded on the two launches which approached her steamer at the same time.

"Looking for Alan, I suppose!" he said to himself with the first pang of personal jealousy he had felt for his stepson since the early days of his passion for the boy's mother. But just then her eyes caught his, and the smile of complete joy which broke over her face left him with no feeling but one of contentment.

When he stood beside her on the deck, with her hands in his, while she looked in his face with a certain sweet anxiety and called him "Steenie," time indeed slipped back, and they seemed to be together again between a colder sea and a grayer sky.

Angelica was agreeably disappointed in her son's fiancée. There was little trace of the peevish girl she remembered in the gentle, well-poised woman, who spoke of Alan with such a restrained propriety of warmth. Angelica, like many persons whose psychological structure is simple, was not without some shrewd discernment of character; but if she suspected complications in Camilla Arden's she chose not to draw them forth or to dwell on anything beyond the very pleasing physical and moral exterior which that young woman presented.

As for Stephen, three days after her arrival he was frankly happy in the situation, especially in the fact that Alan was absent and likely to remain so for some time.

This evening he seemed to be lapped in absolute well-being. They were sitting, he, Angelica and Camilla, on the balcony overhanging the sea. It was about nine o'clock, a dusky, moonless night. They had dined luxuriously and were amiably and lazily disputing about the position of the Southern Cross.

"A most ridiculously overrated constellation," declared Stephen. "But I tell you what is not over-

rated, Miss Arden—the fireflies. You should see them in a certain group of acacias I know of on the Calle Herran. You shall see them! Come on!" He sprang up and held out his hand to her. "It's only a step."

"But I don't feel like taking steps, do you, Mrs. Thorpe?"

Stephen had not included his wife in the invitation, nor did he now.

"You need not take a single one," he said, addressing himself to Miss Arden. "I told Manueto to bring the carriage back about this time. I thought I should go to the club, but I'd rather show you the fireflies. Come!"

And she went. Angelica was alone with only the Southern Cross and the lights over at Cavite to look at and in her ears the sound of hoarse laughter, borne down from the English Club, where dinner was still being somewhat uproariously enjoyed. And Stephen and Camilla Arden drove off in the little victoria, locally known as a "milor," in quest of fireflies.

Their leisurely progress through the neighboring streets, new to Camilla in their evening aspect, was pleasant. Soon they came to the Calle Herran, and after passing the convent, then still the Second Reserve Hospital and a tumble-down barrack, the road was dark. The marshy meadows lay black on either side. The sky above them was dim, but it seemed that the acacias which bordered the road and were grouped in the fields had drawn down all the stars from heaven and tangled them in a dazzling dance among the leaves. About the trunks of these same trees climbed the moon-flower—the *dama de noche*—its whiteness helping the fireflies to lighten the dusk and to perfume it with the very essence of some wild sentiment.

It was the first time that Thorpe and Miss Arden had been alone together. For some time they were silent. Camilla seemed an appropriate gem for such a setting. Her face, surrounded by a mass of close-braided, ash-blond hair, looked as pale as the moon-flowers. Captain Thorpe spoke of it,

but she only laughed and returned an irrelevant answer. Again the silence endured for some moments, when Thorpe leaned forward abruptly to look in her face.

"Why did you do it, Camilla?"

"Do what, Steenie? You know I have done so many things."

"Oh, doubtless! But you know what I mean. Why are you going to marry Alan North?"

She turned her eyes away from him.

"For love," she said.

"I'm serious, Camilla. Why—why—why?"

"I am serious, too. Why should I not be in love with him? He is young and handsome and rich. Oh, there's every reason!"

"Which means that there's none, and you know it. Camilla, you can't treat me quite as you do other people, ever. Don't you remember—?" He took her hands and held them hard and fast in his.

"Don't you remember?" he repeated.

She answered with a little quiver of indignation in her voice. "Yes, I remember, of course. But I should think that you, Steenie, would not care to recall unnecessarily what—we both remember! Let us change the subject and go home."

"No—no! I haven't begun to talk to you yet. I have only been experimenting with you—trying to adjust you!"

"Give it up. I'm not adjustable."

"No, only adorable!"

"Oh, don't, please! That is so puerile—with me. It is too late for you to try the teeth of your fascinations on me, Steenie. Let us ignore everything, in the name of all decency!"

By this time they had crossed the little bridge, passed by the ruined convent and were well in the country, on the road to Santa Anna. He leaned back and sighed.

"Very well. I suppose it is for you to set the key of our intercourse. But you must tell me a little more before I can catch the tune to which we are to jig. Tell me about the other men."

"What other men?"

"Oh, I dare say they are as the sands of the sea! But you know whom I mean—Lord Altamont and that Hungarian beggar."

"Steenie, don't ask me! They were both brutes, but it was of course partly my fault in both cases. But for the publicity my mother was to blame—through vanity in the first case and—well, lack of judgment in the other. You can imagine. You know how I was situated—still am, indeed, except for Alan."

Yes, Stephen knew. Brought up in a house divided against itself, with a mother inconceivably vain, foolish and frivolous, who was at the same time proud and jealous of the beauty her only child had inherited from her, with a fortune totally inadequate for the follies and extravagances of a menage continually moved from continent to continent to follow the whims and schemes of Mrs. Arden—Camilla indeed had unusual excuses for all that had been laid at her door. Her father had given up the struggle and quietly blown his brains out when Camilla was sixteen; and the mother, finding herself a widow, had entered into competition with her daughter's radiant youth. Thence ensued some of the most painfully complicated episodes of Camilla's life.

With all of this Stephen was fully acquainted, and in a general way gave these circumstances their full value in influencing the girl—except where her life touched his. There Stephen's egotism forbade logic.

"You don't know how it hurt me, Camilla, to have you so—so in the public eye." He believed himself as he spoke; but when the details of the two broken engagements were rolled unctuously under the scandalous tongues of the newspaper reporters Thorpe had not been guiltless of that pleasant titillation which most of us experience when those of our acquaintance are apprehended in wrong-doing. Perhaps Camilla understood something of this, for she laughed a little as she answered:

"You put it politely, Steenie! But

I'd rather you did not put it at all. Let sleeping dogs lie! You don't know how grateful I am to Mrs. Thorpe for the way she has received me. She is so—so—perfect herself, and so entirely conventional with it all, that it must be hard for her to have my stormy record embraced in her family history."

He turned the blaze of his great, dark eyes on her. She could see their expression even in this dim dusk.

"I am the person to whom it is all hard," he said.

"Don't, Steenie! You mustn't even play at that sort of thing. We must go home. It is late."

IV

THE days grew into weeks and still Alan lingered in his southern island, engaged in more or less dangerous occupations, which caused his mother, and presumably his affianced, some anxiety. The court-martial of which Captain Thorpe was a member continued in session, though, owing to the necessity in several cases of bringing witnesses from distant points, there sometimes occurred long intervals between meetings. So Stephen had considerable time on his hands.

Though Miss Arden might be supposed to be chafing at the prolonged absence of her lover, which was causing her to extend her visit to his mother far beyond the time originally intended, the climate of Manila seemed to agree admirably with her. At first Angelica had been disposed to wonder at the general verdict which had rather noisily proclaimed Miss Arden's beauty. Her hair, though peculiarly abundant and fine, was almost colorless in its blondness. It made her pale, smooth skin seem sallow; and her extreme thinness approached almost to emaciation. There was, however, her really classic forehead, with straight, delicate brows, many shades darker than the hair, and there were the melancholy gray eyes beneath them. Her mouth, too, was an indisputably beautiful

feature, though it had more than a suggestion of sadness in repose.

But now, to the woman who was watching her with a really kindly interest, there seemed a subtle change in the girl. The damp warmth of the climate drew the stray strands of her naturally straight hair into softening curls about her face. There was sometimes an exquisite, fugitive color in her cheeks. The drooping grace of her figure became more alert. Angelica's admiration was ungrudging. Camilla's beauty was of a less obvious order than her own, even now, but after all it was undeniable.

On the other hand, the metropolitan delights of Manila had lost their revivifying effects on Thorpe. He was even more than normally difficult. Oriental servants fortunately offer a safe outlet for nerves; but even after freely expending his irritation on the various Alexandros and Juans who cumbered the house and stable, there was a considerable quantity left over, from which Angelica, the child, and not infrequently Miss Arden, suffered.

The two women were much together and formed very definite ideas concerning each other. Miss Arden's estimate of her hostess was tolerably correct, Angelica's of Camilla less so; but both were restrained and companionable—civilized, as Camilla would have expressed it. The mornings were spent in driving about and doing mild sight-seeing and shopping and visiting. Stephen usually came home to tiffin at half-past twelve and hurried grumbling away if there was an afternoon session of his court. Then Angelica and Camilla went to their rooms for the siesta, from which they emerged refreshed for the afternoon drive at half-past five. Stephen generally joined them on the Luneta as one of what was likely to be a numerous company assembled about their carriage.

Miss Arden's engagement to Alan North was not announced nor even suspected, and her attractions met with the very general appreciation to which she was accustomed. There was more or less gaiety at the time—dinner

dances at the club, occasional balls and many moonlight launch parties to Cavite or up the Pasig.

About this time little Esther Thorpe began to show the effects of the continuous heat. Her symptoms were not alarming, but they disturbed Angelica principally because the doctors pronounced that, if they continued, the child must go away, at least as far as Japan. She did not feel that it would be advisable to leave Stephen at this time, and her guest, whom Alan in his rare and irregular letters implored her to detain, made another complication.

And so it came about that the child's mother withdrew herself somewhat from the diversions still pursued by Stephen and Miss Arden, and that the character of those diversions changed slightly when she ceased to participate in them. For one thing there was frequently a considerable interval between the time when they left some scene of revelry and that at which they crept up the stairs on tiptoe, to avoid waking the child or the mother—who was too good a wife ever to sit up for her husband's return. Stephen declared to Camilla that dancing and closed rooms—and people and things in general—made his head ache and unfitted him for the administration of justice on the ensuing day; whereas prolonged enjoyment of her unshared society, with a large outdoor background, had a wholesome and stimulating effect. She ridiculed his exactions but ridiculed them gently, and generally ended by subscribing to them.

At last came the news that Alan might soon be expected. He was not taking a leave, but the battalion of which he was in command was about to be relieved by troops from another regiment. As there was no regular line of boats connecting Manila with his island, no cable, and indeed no calculable means of communication, the date of his arrival was uncertain. In fact, the news that he might be expected was not received directly from him, but by the orders for his Department.

Stephen was profoundly depressed

at the prospect of seeing his stepson and made no effort whatever to conceal it. Camilla was feverishly jubilant and Angelica calmly glad.

The old grievance of Alan's superior rank was reopened and bemoaned.

"But, my dear boy, it's only Mex.!" laughed his wife.

"Yes, Captain Thorpe, and I promise you Alan and I sha'n't rank you out of quarters, as that disrespectful army girl whom I have heard of did when she married a man who ranked her father."

Stephen abruptly pushed back his chair from the table—they were at dinner—and went out on the balcony without apology. There was a shade of reproach in Angelica's glance at Camilla as she called to him:

"Do come back, Stephen! We have mango ice, and you know how you adore it!"

But he was obdurate, even before the seductions of his favorite dessert. He alleged the usual headache and said the punkah-rope squeaked, which was a libel on Angelica's housekeeping. So she had the coffee carried out on the balcony, and she and Camilla followed it. She went to Esther almost immediately, however, and Stephen and Camilla were alone.

It was a wonderful night. Such a moon as can scarcely be dreamed of out of the Tropics was making the sea almost intolerably brilliant. Stephen was leaning over the balustrade in gloomy contemplation of the glory before him. Camilla lay in a long chair and watched his discontented profile with a half smile.

"Your temper is really intolerable, Steenie. Don't you think you are getting a little old for the role of *enfant gâté*?"

"Oh, my temper! What do you think of the taste of your remark about quarters? I call it simply vulgar."

"Don't be rude. Don't you see how futile it is to ignore facts? Besides, they can't be ignored for long," she added with a sigh. "There is no use in playing the ostrich, Steenie."

"Yes, that has always been my fool

way! I have tucked my head in the sand—and, God knows, my heart has suffered!"

She was silent for a few minutes, looking dreamily out to sea at the lights which shone from Cavite.

"It's a long time since you and I were children, Steenie; but do you remember that time—it was in Cairo, on the veranda of Shephard's Hotel, when we differed about something and I hit you in the face—and you hit me back, Steenie, more than blow for blow! You were not a chivalrous little boy. Our nurses separated us and our mothers stopped speaking."

"What of it?" he asked sulkily.

"Nothing; only that you have changed singularly little considering the lapse of years." He turned his back to the moon and stood facing her.

"And you are still giving me blows," he said.

"And you are still hitting back. Let us have a truce, Steenie! We shall soon be related—connected at least—No, don't!" as with a muttered word of imprecation he started to enter the house. "Try to be grown-up!"

Singularly enough, at that moment he remembered that his wife had used those same words on the eve of their marriage.

"You know we are going to the Marches' ball tonight. I must go and dress." She rose abruptly.

"I had forgotten," he answered. "Couldn't we cut it and go for a drive instead?—along the beach, for instance, far up. Think what it would be on such a night!"

"We could, but we will not. We are going to the Marches' ball, and we are going early and coming home early. I wonder if we can't persuade Mrs. Thorpe to go, too. I don't believe there is anything really the matter with Esther."

"Try," he said with a short laugh, "and if you succeed I can stay at home. One chaperon ought to be enough for a young woman so—*expérimentée*, we'll say, as you!"

"You are intolerable, Steenie!"

Angelica, as Camilla had expected,

refused to accompany them, and the rather long drive to another quarter of the city was accomplished by Thorpe and Camilla almost in silence. He looked at her much though, and with little effort at convention. She had never seemed to him so exquisite. Her gown was perhaps described by the artist who created it as pale green, but it was really nebulous in color as in texture. She wore a twisted rope of seed pearls about her throat, with an old-fashioned pendant of emeralds. As they stepped into the carriage he wound about her slender, bare arm a necklace of jasmine, ending with a tassel of ihlang-ihlang, which he had bought from a passing native girl as he waited on the pavement for Camilla. Its cloying perfume floated about her.

As they turned into the street which was their destination they found it thronged with carriages and cabs of every description. Thorpe decided that it was best to leave the carriage at the corner of the street and there make tryst with Manuelo, rather than fall into what was believed to be a line and receive a number, in the accepted fashion. The crawling advance and the polyglot shrieks made him intolerably nervous. So they walked up the broad drive from the massive iron gates surmounted by stone pineapples to the brilliant house.

When they had reached the head of the great stairway and had greeted their host and hostess the ball was well under way. It was the house of a high American official, and the American beauty and chivalry of Manila were there in force mingled with a piquant sprinkling of native charms.

The strains of a military band led them to the ballroom. There the pretty, airy dresses of the Americans and the white uniforms of the officers mingled picturesquely, Camilla thought, with the costumes of the Manila women, made in their national fashion, but of heavy brocades and satins. They were glittering with diamonds and pearls and were whirling about with great apparent satisfaction.

Miss Arden was surrounded at once

with clamorous applicants for dances, but she always refused to dance in Manila. She confided to Stephen that she preferred to see others damp and red rather than present such an appearance herself; though the most ingenious imagination would have been taxed to picture her as either the one or the other. She left Thorpe's side, however, and, having gently rid herself of the rest of her cavaliers, with some slight malice selected one, a Major Maybrook, with whom to wander away to admire the vast house, with its ingenious decorations, in which the military and the tropical united.

Thorpe himself carefully selected the reputed American beauty of Manila and sought a similar seclusion in which to assure her of his absolute conviction of her incontrovertible claim to that title. It was the one subject upon which she was capable of real eloquence; so, after the opening sentences of acknowledgment and homage, Stephen was spared further conversational effort and was able to lose himself in conjectures as to Camilla. A polite pretense of listening to Mrs. Aubrey's talk about herself scarcely interrupted his train of thought. It was more than an hour later that he tore himself away from her, with a most convincing show of reluctance, at the approach of an invading horde of admirers who had but just discovered her retreat.

He found Camilla and Major Maybrook still tête-à-tête. He did not know that she had sat out dances and strolled about with half a score of others since he had left her, and they had a confidential air; though, as a matter of fact, their conversation had been as impersonal as is possible between man and maid under such circumstances and with such accompaniments.

Maybrook and Thorpe had known each other long and cordially disliked each other during the same period. Their hatred dated from the time when Stephen was a cadet and Maybrook an instructor at West Point. Stephen blamed Maybrook largely for the troubles which had come near over-

whelming him there, and had never forgiven him, though they had resulted in his speedier appointment and promotion. He was not disposed to regard him more kindly since he had begun to shower attentions on Miss Arden, who did not conspicuously discourage him. Maybrook, who was unmarried, was rather aggressive in recognizing and insisting on Thorpe's character of benedick, in season and out of season, and on that score assuming his duties as host and chap-eron to Miss Arden to be burdensome to them both. And so he was disposed to resent on her behalf Thorpe's rather peremptory invitation to her to go and see the garden. She herself thought that it would have been better if Stephen had kept away for a longer time; but he controlled his temper so nicely under Maybrook's jocularities about "old married men," and his assumption that Miss Arden cared only for the society of those matrimonially eligible, that she took his arm and let him lead her out into the night.

Their progress was much interrupted by applicants for dances, nearly all of whom seemed to regard Stephen in the same light as did Maybrook. So it was some time before they reached the soothing twilight of the garden. Many couples had set them the example, and there was little more seclusion than in the house. But at last, in the very farthest corner they found a great banyan tree, in the pend-ent roots of which had been built a tiny nipa summer-house. By this time Thorpe's nerves and temper both were badly frayed.

"Camilla," he began, "I don't want to quarrel with you——"

"No, you never do," she interrupted.

"—but," he continued, "it really hurts me to see you flirt with a man like Maybrook. He is so awfully far from being a gentleman and so near being a fool!"

"You will be telling me next that Alan wouldn't like it."

"Oh, damn Alan!" He started up from the rustic bench where they were sitting. His face looked ghastly in

the dim light which fell through a green-tinted lantern.

"What do you think might be said of my flirting with you?" she said in a low voice. He was beside her again.

"You don't flirt with me! Tell me you don't!"

"I don't believe I do," she said almost inaudibly.

"Camilla, this is intolerable. I can't stand it. You know what a poor, weak devil I am. I'm at the end of my endurance—at the end of my sanity! I'm going to ask tomorrow to be relieved from this court and go back to the regiment. I have not slept for nights and nights, thinking of—of—when Alan comes."

"I think it would be better, Steenie."

The voice which acquiesced in the sentence of exile was a little broken.

"I'm not quite a blackguard, you know, but there are limits to everything—and I know you want to be—are going to be—good, dear." His voice was husky and the tears stood in his eyes. Neither spoke for a few moments; then they heard laughing voices approaching, and Maybrook and another officer came up, walking on either side of the beauty of Manila. Camilla, reluctantly followed by Thorpe, stepped forward to meet them. She promptly quelled Maybrook's facetiousness by saying coldly:

"Captain Thorpe is ill and we are going home. But I suppose, Captain Thorpe, that we must go upstairs first and say good night and thank you to Mrs. March."

"But it is so early, and you have had no supper," protested Maybrook. "I was just coming to ask if I might have the honor——"

"Oh, it's too warm for supper. We'll stop and get a glass of champagne on the way up. Good night!" And Major Maybrook, looking curiously at Thorpe's white face and drawn lips, suspected for the first time that his role was not exclusively that of chaperon to his beautiful guest.

When they had found their carriage, and wakened the slumbering Manuelo from dreams of glory in the cockpit,

Thorpe directed him what route to take toward home. It was a somewhat circuitous one, but it would bring them through certain narrow, twisting streets which they knew well—where the acacia-encircled houses were set back in their walled gardens, where the hibiscus burned beside each gate and the moon-flowers twined about the stone walls and climbed the stem of every palm tree. It was already late, except for such gay folk as themselves. The moon was setting. The moon-flowers showed but dimly, but their breath mingled maddeningly with a little night breeze just blown up from the sea.

Stephen was singularly silent—for him. His emotions were seldom inarticulate. At last he turned to look long at Camilla.

"Lady of the night!" he murmured.

"Do you know, Camilla, that you and I have known each other only by night?—lately, I mean. We have never spoken to each other by daylight."

"You forget luncheon and dinner and the Luneta," she said.

"Oh, that doesn't count! I mean when we have been really together."

"You might add that our intercourse has been exclusively peripatetic," she replied laughing. And then she went on rather hurriedly: "That perfume is really demoralizing. I think I must suggest to the Provost Marshal General that if he wants Manila ever to become a really well-behaved town he must have the *dama de noche* all dragged up by the roots."

"How can you be flippant. Camilla—now and here!"

"Ah, Steenie, you remember there was a time when I was—not flippant—oh, a long time ago—"

"When we were young, and lutes were strung,
And love-lamps in the casement hung!"

"And you can quote poetry about that time!" he said reproachfully. She made an almost hysterical effort to retain her light tone.

"Oh, as for that, you know it was

always my weakness. Other people have been so obliging as to give my thoughts and feelings so much better expression than I can myself! I believe I should think in poetry—other people's, *bien entendu*—if I were dying." Her struggle after levity was unavailing. Stephen seized her hands and drew her toward him. But she pulled back.

"But you are not dying—you are living—oh, living!" he said breathlessly.

"Ah, I am done with living, Steenie! I think the very end has come tonight. Let go my hands, dear."

"You haven't called me 'dear' since—since—"

"Since you ceased to want to be called so! Don't forget that, Steenie! It sounds awfully puerile, but if you had been—well, in earnest, let us say—at that time I might have been—not a very good woman, perhaps; I fear my potentialities for good are considerable—but—different."

"Don't talk that way, Camilla—of what either of us might have been. This is not the time—this is now—and I, at least, am most wretched."

"Do I seem very hilarious? I have put it off, but you and I must have a settling day, Steenie. You thought ill of me at that time, and you had some reason. But you know what my excuses were—oh, you know it all!"

"Yes, I know it all, but we have forgiven each other, so what has it to do with us now?"

"Nothing, I suppose, only—I should like to know—perhaps you, too, had your excuses when you—jilted me."

"You gave me every reason to believe that you were going to jilt me!" he rejoined, releasing her hands and turning away.

She laughed a little. "And so you thought you would forestall me! Well, I should have been quicker to take the initiative. But you did not love me, Steenie."

"And have you been trying to retaliate now—now that I am dying for you?"

"No—no—no! Oh, Steenie, try to be a little sorry for me! For once don't think only of yourself. I am not so bad as you believe me. I have meant no harm. I only wanted a few weeks of life before life ends for me—as it will when—when I marry."

"And I am the victim!"

"The victim? Ah, dear, I don't know. The only thing I know in the world is that—you are the only man I ever loved."

She was in his arms and his mouth was on hers.

The little spotted ponies trotted along and Manuëlo's discreet back betrayed no consciousness. One or two sentries passed them; but after peering into the carriage, of which Stephen had drawn up the hood, they allowed it to go by unchallenged. The two drew apart when they came under the glare of lights on the Ayala bridge, but after that there were many minutes of darkness and ecstatic oblivion before they clattered into the garden of Thorpe's house.

There was a dim light visible in the distant wing where Angelica was sleeping with the child, separated by two great rooms and a passage from the drawing-room, into which the stairs led. Stephen turned off the one electric light which burned at the front door and they climbed the stairs in darkness, their arms about each other and his mouth seeking hers at every step. The windows and doors separating the drawing-room and balcony were all drawn back, but the moon had set and little light came through them. In the same way they crossed the room and, still clinging together, leaned over the balustrade and looked down into the whispering sea.

It was some time before they found speech. Then, at first, each murmured only the other's name. At last Stephen said hoarsely:

"This is the end of everything, sweetheart—everything that has ever been for either of us—and the beginning. We can't live without each other, can we?—can we?"

"No, no, we cannot! Oh, Steenie, we are so horrid, and I love you so!"

"We are not horrid—at least you are not—and I love you—I love you!"

"What are we going to do, dear?—what can we do?"

"Do? I shall resign tomorrow, and then—oh, darling, I can't think just yet—but we shall *live*—and tomorrow—"

There was the harsh grating of bamboo on the tessellated floor and out of the darkness strode a strong, thick-set figure.

"Alan!" gasped Camilla as he dropped a heavy hand on Stephen's shoulder and jerked him about to face him, at the same time turning on an electric light which hung on a pillar close by.

"I think it quite unlikely that there will be any tomorrow for you, Captain Thorpe." His face was white and he spoke in a low, rough voice. Stephen shook himself free and stepped back. He drew his slight, nervous figure to its full height, nearly a head greater than Alan's.

"Sneak!" he said.

"I am not a sneak—but I would not explain myself to you—liar—coward—thief!" His face was distorted and his teeth set.

Thorpe, the excitable, was quite calm now. He made no answer and only said: "Go to your room, Camilla." She shook her head and gazed as if fascinated at Alan's face, horrible with the rage of a man usually calm.

"I am going to kill you," he said, going a step nearer to Thorpe.

"Very well; I shall be ready to meet you. I suppose even you have someone who can technically be called a friend."

"'Friend'—'meet'!" interrupted the other savagely. "Are you talking the jargon of the code? I tell you I am going to kill you here and now!"

"I am still at your service, but you forget that there is a woman present."

"I don't forget it. I'm glad of it. The woman who could help to bring about such a situation can bear to see

the finish. I wouldn't let her go if she wanted to."

"Your mother——"

"Don't dare to name my mother or I shall strangle you before I shoot you!"

"Ah, it's to be shooting, is it? But that makes such a noise!" said Stephen with a drawl which had always exasperated Alan and now additionally maddened him.

"Yes, it's to be shooting—and, by God, I'll spoil that face of yours!"

"Steenie, he's crazy—he's crazy!" gasped Camilla. "You sha'n't be murdered! I'm going to call the patrol—he can't be far!" She started toward the stairs, but Alan sprang forward and seized her arm.

"You are not going to call the patrol and you are going to see this thing out!" He pushed her into a chair and stood between her and Stephen. His powerful figure, in ill-fitting and travel-stained khaki, seemed the very embodiment of brute force. No greater contrast could be imagined to Thorpe, clad in spotless white, leaning, slender and languid, against the balustrade.

Alan had been traveling with troops and still wore a pistol on a leather belt about his waist. He drew it from its holster and turned to face Stephen.

"Oh, I'm going to give you a chance, too," he said. "I believe you are the sort of idiot who goes armed—in case of avenging husbands and lovers, I suppose. Pull it out!"

"Thank you," said Thorpe coldly. "I decline to take any part in a duel in the presence of Miss Arden. I sha'n't interfere with the murder—or execution, if you prefer to call it so."

"Pull it out, you fool!"

Stephen only shook his head and smiled. Alan roughly dragged him about and drew from his hip pocket a small, silver and ivory mounted revolver. He held it up scornfully between thumb and finger.

"It looks like you—just such a one as I can imagine you selecting!" And indeed the contrast between the two arms was as striking as that between the men who bore them. "But it will answer." He thrust Thorpe's pistol

into his hand, and Stephen's fingers closed around it. But he let his arm drop at his side. Alan drew back half a dozen paces, raised his pistol and cocked it. The click seemed to free Camilla from the paralysis which had held her during the past few minutes. She sprang from the chair into which Alan had thrown her and with a sharp "Steenie!" flung herself on Thorpe's breast. Alan lowered his pistol.

"Miss Arden," he said, "I haven't the slightest objection to taking your life also, and I shall do so unless you move. But your attitude prevents Captain Thorpe from defending himself."

Thorpe dropped his revolver on the floor and threw his arms about her.

"Darling—darlingest—he means it!" he said. "It's all over—this is good-bye."

He laid his cheek for a moment on hers and then kissed her long on the mouth. While he did so Alan again raised his pistol, and Thorpe had only time to fling Camilla from him when a shot rang out—only one.

When Angelica, in her night-robe, her eyes just startled from sleep, came upon the scene Camilla was crouched on the floor, with Steenie's dead and disfigured face pressed against her breast. Alan's empty hands hung at his sides and his voice was low and broken as he said:

"He stole my mother and then my wife—and I killed him!"

ESPÉRANCE

La Muse

MAINTENANT que la lampe est pâle et va mourir
Et qu'une ombre indécise erre autour de ce livre
Où tes regards voilés peuvent à peine suivre
Les signes que la nuit croissante vient couvrir,
Poète, rêve un peu . . . laisse un moment revivre
Les images que tu croyais le plus chérir
Et vois comme le cœur très vite se délivre
Des meilleurs souvenirs dont il aimait souffrir!
Et les voyant déjà fantômes d'une autre heure
Celles dont le baiser devait être éternel,
Encore et sans regret charme-toi de ce leurre . . .
Car c'est un doux moment d'évoquer l'irréel
Que celui de la solitude taciturne,
Quand la lampe s'éteint en un reflet nocturne . . .

Le Poète

Oui, tout m'a fui, tout m'a menti, rien n'est resté
Des charmes que mon cœur donnait aux apparences
Et dès l'instant que j'ai touché la volupté
Son baiser ne m'a rien appris que de souffrances!
Mais c'est alors que j'ai connu la vérité
Et que l'amour rayonne en pures espérances
Dans les pleurs où le ciel fait luire sa clarté,
Comme dans la rosée aux vives transparences!
Oui, tout meurt mais non pas l'amour dont l'âme vit,
Et si même la terre est mauvaise à ses rêves
Qu'importe!—elle a son cher secret qui la ravit!
Qu'importe que le temps et ses minutes brèves
Aillent dans le passé noyer leur vanité,
S'il nous reste la vie et l'Immortalité.

VICOMTE JACQUES DE BEAUFORT.

THE MAXIMS OF METHUSELAH

BEING THE ADVICE GIVEN BY THE PATRIARCH IN HIS NINE HUNDRED, SIXTY AND NINTH YEAR, TO HIS GREAT-GRANDSON SHEM

By Gelett Burgess

THE maxims of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, for the guidance of his son's son's son, Shem, at his coming of age:

2 To know wisdom and instruction concerning women; to perceive the words of knowledge whereby the damsels of his choice may be judged; to give subtlety to the simple, to the young man discretion in his loves.

3 ¶My son, so live that when she seeth thy photograph, *she may smile* and think untellable thoughts.

4 Praise not a woman for what she hath, but for what she hath *not*, and thy reward shall be exceeding great;

5 A witty woman for her beauty, and a comely damsel for her intellect; a wise woman for her jests, and a frivolous maid for her *literary criticism*;

6 A pianist for her cookery and a housewife for her mathematics; so shalt thou praise them;

7 But the *mother of one babe* shall be flattered through her child alone, for there the straight way lieth.

8 ¶Lo, wickedness weareth the look of innocence, and the baby stare gazeth from the froward woman's eyes. She hungereth after the callow youth; she studieth the ways of the virgin, and walketh humbly;

9 She pretendeth to be *shocked*, she casteth down her eyes: she delighteth to be instructed.

10 She laugheth in her sleeve, she amuseth herself with the young man's innocence; and when he is gone, she

telleth his follies to her friends, she laugheth in glee thereat.

11 ¶Beware thou of a woman who signeth not her name to her letters; she will bear watching, she hath a *past*.

12 But she who dealeth in ciphers and symbols, who hath her secret name for this and for that, who calleth not a spade a spade, so that none but thee only may understand her, seek her and woo her, for she hath cunning; observe her ways and be wise.

13 Knowest thou a maiden who showeth all her letters to her mother? Cultivate her, and she shall soon send thee words *as of fire*. Even as the blower on the fireplace hideth the flames, so shall she break forth when her parents' scrutiny be removed.

14 ¶If thou suspectest thy love, it is better to leave her than to doubt; but to believe and to doubt also, it is a bitter torment.

15 In my youth I knew a maiden of the Land of Nod, and I loved her. And my friends came unto me and said: Lo, she is a devil, cast thou her off. But I made answer, saying: Verily, I know well that she is *either* angel or devil, for in no other wise could she delight my soul; but it is *better* to think her an angel while I may; yea, it is more *affording*.

16 ¶She who leaveth her hair in the *comb* shall be cast out into utter darkness.

17 Count no matron happy till she hath passed thirty and *hath not waxed*

fat; for then do her sisters torment her, saying: In *this gown* thou needest have no fear, for it becometh thee; but *wear not* horizontal stripes, for thy hip increaseth.

18 ¶Many are the speeches of the conventional women, aye, in my books are they all inscribed, and I know well how to expect them, and am not disappointed;

19 She sayeth: Lo, if thou hadst come *yesterday*, then we had a good dinner, and *last week* was mine house in perfect order.

20 She sayeth: Lo, it is passing strange that my child behaveth not before company; *when we are alone*, then will he speak his piece.

21 Two things she sayeth on parting; yea, three speeches are inevitable when she leaveth thine house. Lo, I have had *such* a charming time, and, it is so *good* of you to have asked me; and, now *do* come and see us.

22 ¶Women know well of women's ways, for if a man love, he telleth much, aye, he enlighteneth her, concerning his previous loves; but no man knoweth how another man maketh love, for this women tell not.

23 Though a woman be as honest as a child before company, yet will she lie *to the man she loveth*, and to him only.

24 My son, if a woman confesseth that she love thee, and thou lovest her not, forsake her not in her anguish, make her to laugh; let thy conduct be merry.

25 Yet when she sayeth: I have repented of my folly, forget thy pride and be glad; remind her not of her words, let thy mouth be shut upon her weakness aforetime.

26 ¶Some women are captured by storm, and some taken by siege: yet if there be not a traitor in her heart that shall deliver up the garrison, *thou shalt not prevail over her*.

27 I say unto thee, verily, not *every* woman who looketh like a maiden going to a tea is a typewriter; for some are maidens going to a tea.

28 If, when thou callest, she asketh thee concerning thy goings-in and thy

comings-out and what thou doest, take heed, for she thinketh of other things; she prepareth herself *to work thee*.

29 ¶Lo, I have watched the rivalry of maidens at the summer hotel, yea, at the seashore have I regarded their strife. Yet could I not judge a damsel's popularity by the flowers she received, for verily, it is oft her *mother* who sendeth them, and *the old man* footeth the bills.

30 ¶Son, be not deceived by the undemonstrative, for a woman of *ice* oft desireth to be wooed with ardor, and she who standeth apart *hath her own opinion* of the languid lover.

31 Propose not unto a woman when she hath gotten a new frock, nor when she is puffed up with victories; when she reigneth and rejoiceth in her hour of triumph *come not nigh unto her*, for thou shalt not prevail over her; but if she be ill or a-weary, when she is cast down in spirit and needeth a comforter, then *be thou ready* and make thy suit.

32 After she hath walked far and resteth; while the storm gathereth and the thunders are loosed in the heavens; while she listeneth to fair music; when the wine cup is half-emptied: then shalt thou have thy way with her.

33 And a wedding in haste is worth two at leisure.

34 If she dresseth her hair in a new fashion, lo, some one hath wondrous influence over her, and if he shaveth his beard, *there is a reason*.

35 ¶As fascinating as a *loose tooth* is a secret to a young maid; for she knoweth not whether to spit it out or to keep it safe. Yet she can in no wise forget it.

36 Catnip pleaseth the kitten, and the reading of her palm rejoiceth the damsel alway. Blessed is he who clotheth a woman's vanity with *pleasant prophecies*;

37 He sayeth: lo, thou art indeed *sensitive*; thou art much *misunderstood*. Thy friends comprehend thee *not*, for thou art too *subtle* for them. And within four years thou shalt *travel*.

38 For a woman goeth to the sorcerer and the fortune-teller, and she returneth with a marvel alway. Yea, though she believeth not, *yet doth she believe*, and her lips are full of wonders.

39 Behold, he who spillesh ice-cream upon a front breadth shall be forgiven, but whoso mentioneth her

last night's indiscretion shall be despised.

40 Better are *two right-hand gloves* together, than a man in the moonlight with the wrong woman; and for a maiden to be alone by the seashore is as a hat without a hatpin; it breedeth wild thoughts.



DREAM-SHIPS

DREAM-SHIPS, dream-ships, coming up out of the sea,
Laden with mystical freight are ye?

I have surfeit of dreams already—
Bring me no more from the sea.

Dream-ships, dream-ships, coming up out of the sea,
Laden with Orient pearls are ye?

I have burden of tears already—
Bring me no more from the sea.

Dream-ships, dream-ships, coming up out of the sea,
Draped with purple of Tyre are ye?

I have garments of woe already—
Bring me no more from the sea.

Dream-ships, dream-ships, coming up out of the sea,
Your freight is the word you bear to me.

And my songs are finished already—
Bring me no more from the sea.

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH WELLS.



THE DANGER

BLACK—I hear that old Corker is dangerously ill with the gout.

WHITE—I didn't know gout was dangerous.

BLACK—It isn't, but Corker is.



AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

FRIEND—Cheer up. A woman's no means yes.

THE LOVER—But it was such a positive negative.

PAGANISM

SOVEREIGN summer, when the season ripens for your gentle reign,
 When the sensuous June is pulsing unintelligible pain;
 Emerald evenings, crimson mornings, earth and wood and sky and wave,
 Take and make me what I first was, centuries ago—your slave!

Let me lie upon the hillside where the ancient white oaks speak
 With the keen, clean air of morning, with the grass against my cheek,
 Where the waters in the distance through a thousand eddies run
 And the whole glad world is paying tribute to our lord the sun.

Make me man as first you knew him when his soul was at its prime,
 Sovereign summer, as he sought you in the first sweet summertime;
 Warm my heart with all your sunshine; flood my breast with all your pain,
 All your gladness, all your sorrow—take me to your arms again!

Plunge me, atom then for atom, ere the August yellows fade,
 Back to that remembered morrow when the world was newly made;
 Fill me, thrill me with your spirit, mad desire and glad despair,
 Till the elemental being claim again the freer air!

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



GOOD WORK

"I HEAR that the Sunday-school superintendent has been doing some great missionary work."

"You don't say so!"

"Yes; he has converted a lot of the church funds to his own use."



TACT

SHE—James, you were half an hour trying to find the keyhole last night.

HE—Well, my dear, you know how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

THE INSIDE STORY OF IT

By Rebecca Harding Davis

MY readers who are past middle age will remember the period in the last century when Colonel Philip Talbot, Senator from New York, was the popular candidate for the Presidency. He was elected Governor of New York, the intention being that that office should serve as a stepping-stone to the nomination for President a few months later.

Now, it was the mass of the people who wanted to put Talbot into the White House. The bosses of his party looked askance at him. "Phil's unsafe," they said; "he balks at rein and spur." The little man wants to go it alone."

However, his popularity was too strong a factor to be ignored. Almost against their will, they ran him through the polls in New York.

The evening of his election, as the Washington newspapers announced, "Colonel Talbot entertained at dinner the members of the Cabinet and the diplomatic corps in his palatial mansion on X avenue. The dinner was followed by a ball, unequaled in the Capital for many years in magnificence and cost."

The drill-majors of the party from every State were at this ball, trying to buttonhole the colonel and to drive a bargain as to the wages he would pay for their help in the coming struggle.

Phil, always an eager, cordial host, had a bit of banter and an intimate word for every man of them. It never occurred to him that they wanted wages. If he had to go into this Presidential fight these good fellows would be his comrades, his backers! Hence, each man went away

feeling that he was "old Phil's" personal friend. Instead of the post-office at Dyck's Crossing, which he meant to ask for, a place in the Cabinet, eh?

Laidley, the huge Congressman from Texas, loomed on the crowd in one room and another until he found Mrs. Talbot, where she stood receiving some belated guests. He dropped into a seat behind her.

"Here's the one thing in Washington," he said loudly, to the other men near, "that stays the same every day. This little lady never buzzes about. Come when you like, here she is, at home, in the same white frock, and her hair in the same yellow puffs. The other women are more rabid politicians than the men. Oh, I could tell you things! Always an axe for you to grind—every darned one of them. But Mrs. Talbot—why, she doesn't know what party Phil belongs to—do you, now?"

The men laughed. She looked up at him. Her face was small and insignificant, and her blue eyes were faded. But there were strange meanings in them when they rested on his.

"God bless my soul!" muttered the Texan, shuffling uncomfortably. Could she—? She had seen him so seldom! Perhaps Talbot was unsympathetic? These politicians were hard, tough men.

He rose and left the room hastily. Poor thing! Poor, ugly little thing! At his age, too! What would Laura say when he told her? But he never would tell her. He would keep the little woman's miserable secret.

Just then he ran across Freyer, the

leader of the other party in the House, and, as they walked on together, he spoke of the thing uppermost in his mind.

"Talbot's wife? What do I think of her? Phil took me in one afternoon. Her rooms are always crowded, and she sits and knits some white fluffy stuff—and never talks to but one man at a time. I watched her knit, knit, and smile—smile, and glance furtively about, and I got up and left, double-quick. I know when I'm near a bigger thing than myself! Why, that woman could turn Jem Freyer inside out as she would her glove!"

"She is essentially weak and feminine, in my opinion," said the Texan, with dignity.

Freyer laughed. "Why, Joe, all Talbot's success has come through that soft-whispering mite of a woman. He is nothing but a lazy, warm-hearted boy. Brilliant and magnetic—yes. But it was she who pushed and coaxed and whipped him on. She'll shove him into the Presidency yet—unless somebody pulls the check rein." He stopped with a meaning laugh.

"You see," he went on after a minute, "she's worked him for thirty years. She found him, a poor carpenter in a Virginia village. She saw the stuff that was in him, and married him—to use it. She forced him to study law, to move North, to go into politics, to speculate—to make money—honestly, if possible—if not—" He waved his hand and nodded. "She means to be the boss in the White House yonder, to rank with queens—to marry her daughter to a duke or billionaire. It would be a pity, too, to sell that girl to the highest bidder. She's a genuine little thing, a bit of the same stuff as her father."

"She doesn't look now as if she were waiting for the duke," Laidley said, laughing. They had stopped at the ballroom door. Miss Talbot and her partner stood near it. "Who is that young six-footer with her?"

"I don't know," Freyer said; "he's a newcomer. Not in politics, I'll wager. He has a whiff of the country

about him, eh? She knows all about him, you bet! I've never seen her look like that before."

Freyer stood watching her, whistling under his breath, and tugging at his red mustache. He had a keen scent for a wholesome love affair. Presently he shook his head. "The old woman will never tolerate that!" he said at last. "There'll be a fine game soon. If the little girl is getting the worst of it, I may take a hand myself. Come, let's have some supper."

"Let us get out of this crowd," the six-footer was saying to Miss Talbot. He hurried her through the halls to a deserted little room. Molly laughed to herself. She thought, like Freyer, that there was a whiff of the country about Hugh Payne. The evening dress, the courtly manner, were only a sort of masquerade; the man below was big, simple, direct, like one used to living alone with the hills and woods and going straight to the heart of things.

"Do you know," he said, "how long it is since we stood by this fire—just here? Four years, Molly, four years to a day. My God, how they have crept by! There were days when I was so sick for one sight of your face, for one sound of your voice, that I nearly gave it up and came creeping back to you. But I fought it out. Did you miss me? Did you ever miss me once?"

"Yes, I missed you, Hugh," she whispered. She was a plump, methodic little girl with smooth brown hair and dark eyes, out of which always looked a calm, reasonable soul. But now some strange, live thing looked out of them at him that was not calm nor reasonable.

"When your mother sent you away that day," he went on, "she came up to me just here, and looked me over. Then she said—"

"Oh, why do you bring up what she said? What's the use, Hugh?"

"I must. You never knew why I went away. She used plain English enough. She said: 'What right have you to ask for my child? You have neither position nor wealth nor brains.

You have done nothing in the world. She is but a child. She has seen no other men. If you are an honorable gentleman you will go away for four years. Leave her alone, bring no influence to bear upon her. Let her know something of life. Then we shall see whether she will persist in this school-girl fancy.'

"She put it brutally, but there was truth in what she said. I obeyed her. I never saw you again. I went back to the old farm in Kentucky. I have kept away from you for four years."

"What did you do there, Hugh?" whispered Molly. "I used to wonder every day what you were doing."

"I justified your mother's opinion of me," he said with a bitter laugh. "I set out to win fame and distinction for you. I tried the law, but I 'hadn't the legal brain,' they said. I went into politics and was beaten. I'm afraid I'm not a brainy man, Molly. Farming is the only thing I'm fit for. I have made a big success in that. I've a house ready for you. It's not a palace like this. But it's home—"

His voice dropped into a whisper. Molly had been waiting four years to hear these very words. Why would these detestable strangers crowd into the room at the moment and silence him?

They came, innocently enough, to take leave of her. Among them was Mr. Freyer, who eyed Hugh Payne sharply; then going back to the ball-room, he waited his chance and said to Mrs. Talbot:

"Handsome young giant, your friend Payne, who is with Miss Talbot! He looks as David might after he had killed Goliath—in modern clothes. Whatever he does, I'll bet he comes out a winner!"

Mrs. Talbot smiled vaguely. She never spoke when smiles or vague glances would suffice. But her heart gave a sickening throb. Could it be that horse-breeder Payne had turned up again?

A couple of hours later the great house was dark and silent, except in

the colonel's dressing-room. Talbot had many whims which had hardened into habits. One was to end every day with a bowl of hot milk and a bit of pilot bread, while he gossiped with Molly. He had kept himself awake at many a state banquet by the thought of this *bonne bouche* waiting for him. Molly, in a wrapper, lounged on an easy-chair beside him, brushing her hair. Mrs. Talbot, still in her ball dress, sat erect by a lamp in the chamber beyond, reading the evening lesson from her prayer-book. No human being had ever seen her lounge or brush her hair.

"Molly, I've an ideal!" cried the colonel. "Let's be off to the island by the six o'clock train in the morning and have a week's fishing!"

"Tomorrow?" Molly said thoughtfully. The colonel often bolted from work to the woods and always took her with him. "You can't do it, daddy," she said. "The committee will be here in the morning to announce your election to you and hundreds of politicians to lay plans for the big campaign. You can't run away like that."

"I can throw up the whole business!" cried Talbot, like an angry boy. "I never wanted to be Governor of New York nor President of the United States. I did think the campaign would be fun—to head an army of your comrades and friends. I was told a thousand times I had the hearts of the people. What do they care for me? *Me!* It's office they want! I've been in that seething mass downstairs for hours—each man trying to sell himself for some miserable little post. You should have seen their greedy eyes! It made me positively sick. I'll cut the whole business!" he added, casting a guilty glance, as he raged, into the other room.

The little woman put a mark in her prayer-book, shut it, and came to the door. "It would be a pity you should run away tomorrow, Philip," she said quietly. "Two delegations from Indiana came today to arrange operations for the Presidential campaign.

Northern Indiana is lukewarm, you know. New York is secure for you now. If you can gain Indiana your election is sure. I wouldn't insult the State just now, if I were you."

"I tell you, I'm stifling," cried the little man. "The bargain and sale—the moral filth of it all!"

"These telegrams," she went on gently, taking up a sheaf of yellow papers from her desk, "came to you tonight from every city in the country. Mass meetings are called celebrating your victory—you are greeted as the coming President. The eyes of the whole country will be on you tomorrow, and you will have to run to hide on Parmor's Island!"

"Yes. You can't go. You're too hard on mother, daddy," interrupted Molly. "How long has she worked to gain you this chance? It has been her life."

"It's not my life, then!" said Talbot. "I want to be myself—not a party puppet. I want time to be alone to go into the woods, to read a book. That's the kind of thing I was born for. There are days when I must have it or I'd go mad."

His wife looked at him steadily, then she came into the room. "Let us settle this thing now, and for always," she said gently.

Molly stood up with a little gasp of admiration. Her mother was not exactly a human being, perhaps, but she was a miraculous manufacture. She was made up of the best. Even her plain white gown was of priceless lace, and the string of beads, half hidden on her neck, was of pearls famous on two continents. The little white wisp of a woman with her yellow hair and pale eyes had neither great beauty nor intellect, but she had that compelling power, call it magnetism or hypnotism, or what you will, which makes its possessor a ruler of men.

"There is no need of talking about it," she said to Philip. "You know what I have tried to do for you for thirty years." She came close to him. The thin little body swayed a trifle. Molly caught her in her arms.

She saw the big drops of sweat come out on her mother's upper lip. "It has gone on for thirty years, and now when success is sure, you balk me! I'm—I'm tired!"

"Mother!" cried the girl. "He knows! He doesn't mean to balk you! You've been our good angel, dear mother!"

Colonel Talbot's eyes twinkled. He took his wife in his arms and placed her in a chair. "I will not oppose you, Priscilla. Have it your own way for the rest of your life," he said gravely.

"That won't be long," sobbed Molly, stroking Mrs. Talbot's hands, with white face and trembling lips. She never had seen her mother in this condition of nervous collapse. "We'll give our lives to nursing you," the dull-witted girl cried passionately.

"I had planned your life, too," whispered Mrs. Talbot, holding Molly's plump hand in her bony, cold fingers. All that was genuine in her was in the touch. She loved Molly even better than herself. "No girl in the country ever stood where I meant to place you. But you choose a Kentucky stock farm!"

Molly did not speak for some time. Then she said slowly:

"I promise you I will not marry Hugh Payne against your will, mother."

"He is a man that—"

"I have promised. That is enough," said Molly quickly. "We will never speak of him again."

Colonel Talbot carried his wife to her chamber. When he came back he took Molly in his arms. "You have ruined your life, child!" he said.

"Mother is ill—she may be dying! I can't think of myself," she sobbed.

Philip lifted his gray eyebrows doubtfully. He had known Priscilla many years.

"I cannot see Hugh again. You will explain to him, daddy. You'll be kind to him?" she cried, clinging to his neck.

A month later the big Texan met Freyer one day in the rotunda.

"Well, what d'ye think of the Talbot boom now?" he shouted.

Freyer nodded. "Bigger than I expected."

"Big? Why, it's sweeping the country like a prairie fire."

"Prairie fires soon burn out, if they're treated right," said Freyer.

"How are you goin' to treat this one, hey? I tell you, Freyer, you've nobody to match Talbot."

Freyer grunted by way of answer. "There goes that fellow Payne," he said. "What's he doing here still? Waiting on Miss Molly?"

"No. She's turned him down. They say he watches for hours on the street just to see her drive past."

Freyer soon shook the Texan off. "She never turned him down," he said to himself. "The girl begins to look pale and ghastly. That old woman's at work."

He walked down the street, pulling his red mustache. The Talbot boom had amazed him and the other leaders of his party. It was a fact, as Laidley claimed, that they had nobody who could make a fight against Phil.

"The old woman's played a good game!" he said, nodding. "And that boy and girl are bein' done to death by it. It's time I took a hand." He stopped and glanced around. "It's a Tuesday. Tuesday's my lucky day. I guess I'll play my game right off."

An hour later, Freyer, in immaculate afternoon garb, sent up his card to Mrs. Talbot with a request for a private audience.

Her drawing-room, as usual, was full of men. It was the meeting ground of the party leaders. Now, Freyer was the leader of the opposition. She turned his card over thoughtfully once or twice. He was not a man for small manœuvres. This visit meant important business.

She directed the servant to take him to the library and a moment later followed, a noiseless little figure, soft, gauzy robes like gray mist clinging to her.

Freyer bowed low as she came in.

When she spoke he bowed again, but could say nothing for the moment. He was surprised to find himself so ill at ease. Now that he had begun it he felt how brutal was the business he had taken in hand. She was only a woman, after all. He looked at her as a butcher does at the helpless sheep into which he is going to stick his knife.

"Come you in peace or come you in war?" she said, smiling gaily.

"In war, without a doubt," he replied grimly.

Still smiling, she motioned him toward a chair.

"No, I'll not sit down in your house, Mrs. Talbot. It wouldn't be the clean thing to do, considering my business here."

"What is your business?"

He looked into her eyes a minute. Yes, she was strong enough to bear the blow. It had to be given, to save the election, to save little Molly.

"I came to you instead of to Colonel Talbot, because you could understand my errand better. You will grasp the situation and act at once. He would have raged and—never acted."

"What is your business?" she repeated.

"This—I shall be quite frank. I represent my party. We mean to gain the next election. If Colonel Talbot runs we shall not do it. He is stronger than any man we can put up."

Her face flushed with triumph.

"Yes. And then——?"

"He must not run."

"How will you prevent it?"

"In this way." He drew from his pocket a dingy paper.

"As soon," he said, with slow distinctness, "as a man is offered to the public as a candidate for that office every incident of his past life is dragged out—every petty disgrace or crime. One man was forced to retire because he had stolen ten dollars when he was a school-boy; another, because he had legitimized a mulatto child—you are ill, Mrs. Talbot? I will go away—I will talk to Phil——"

"No. Go on. What have you there?"

He laid the paper on the table. "This is the certificate of the marriage of John Forsyth and Priscilla Allen on July thirteenth, eighteen-fifty."

"You were Priscilla Allen. John Forsyth is living now—a rum-soaked hobo, but as such he can claim his wife. You never have been divorced from him."

God! How old and weak she was! Her lips shrank back from her teeth. For a moment it was a death's head staring at him. She touched the paper.

"It is a lie."

"No. You know that it is true. Forsyth can be produced at once." His voice failed him. He stopped for a minute. "I have reason to believe that Talbot never has known anything of this matter," he said, looking away from her.

"He does not," she gasped. "He is not to blame. It was I——"

"And for God's sake," burst out Freyer, "why were you such a fool?"

"He thought me a young girl. He never would have taken Forsyth's cast-off wife. I always meant to tell him some day, but——" She steadied herself for a moment. "It will do Phil no harm if you make this known," she said. "It was I who did it."

"You know," said Freyer roughly, "that the American people never will tolerate in the White House a man whose life has been openly immoral. On the day this paper is made public you know that Talbot's chance of election is over forever. I propose to publish it on next Wednesday throughout the United States. If you would stop me, let Colonel Talbot on Tuesday issue a positive refusal to accept the candidacy under any conditions. And, as soon as you announce the engagement of your daughter to Hugh Payne, I will burn this paper and no human being shall ever know of its contents."

She turned her back and was silent a long time.

At last she said. "How can I be sure that you will keep your word?"

"I don't know," said Freyer simply. "I will keep it. I'm an honorable man, generally. This is a damned mean business I'm at now. But I had to save my party and—that girl." He gathered up his papers. "I'll go now."

Her gown was not grayer than her skin, and her teeth still showed strangely, like those of a corpse. But she smiled and bowed as he went out.

He drew a long breath outside. "What a fighter!" he gasped. "The staying power of her! What a pity she's not a man!"

Mr. Laidley was not returned to Congress next term and he took his wife abroad for two years. He met Freyer on the steamer coming home, and they had time to talk over things.

"You never could have put your man into the White House," Laidley said one day, "if Talbot had not gone back on us."

"No."

"I never could understand that move of Phil's. To throw up the fight before it began, when success was sure. It beat me!"

"It was said," Freyer replied after a moment, "that Talbot had organic trouble of the heart and that his physicians warned him that the excitement of a campaign would mean death to him."

"Very likely!" Laidley shook his head gloomily. "Excitable little fellow! I heard that when his wife died he gave up politics altogether and went down to live on the farm in Kentucky with his daughter and son-in-law."

"Yes, he is there."

"Mrs. Talbot died suddenly, soon after he declined the nomination—so the papers said."

Freyer nodded. The men were leaning over the rail, watching the dark water sweep by. Laidley glanced curiously at his companion and lowered his voice.

"Freyer, d'ye know, there were queer whispers in Paris about that woman's death? It was hinted she was unhappy with Phil—suicide—chloral, eh?"

"Nonsense!" said Freyer loudly. "Mrs. Talbot died of spinal meningitis. She wasn't the kind to run away because she was beaten!" He struck a match, but Laidley noticed that his

hand shook, as he held it to his cigar.

"She was a great fighter," he said hoarsely. "Sometimes I am sorry that she was beaten!"



A FAREWELL

SO now you leave me, turn away your face,
And from my threshold evermore depart!
Light-footed Love, I will not pray you stay,
Like one forlorn of heart!

Because I am bereft of your sweet eyes,
You think that I shall yield me to despair?
Here Duty waits me, smiling as you smiled,
Believe me, and as fair!

I played with you—that's all—a summer's day,
Was happy and am happy as you go.
You think there are no other charms than yours
To set one's heart aglow?

A smile—a dream—your lightly go your way,
I mine, to other fortunes that shall be.
So, playmate, fare you well! Come, Duty—Love!
Turn once, and look on me!

MARGARET JOHNSON.



THE HOME-COMING OF BENHAM

MRS. BENHAM—Have you anything to say for yourself?

BENHAM—Yes.

"Well, what is it?"

"If I said it I wouldn't have it to say, would I?"



BRIGGS—Have you had any accident with your auto?

GRIGGS—Yes. I succeeded in running it a whole day.

ONE KISS

ONE kiss, and the birds are singing,
And life is a long, long bliss;
Blossom and sun are telling
The tender worth of a kiss.

One kiss, and my soul awakens,
Wakens to throb and glow
With the noblest, holiest pleasure
That ever a soul may know.

One kiss, and the earth has vanished,
The glories of heaven uncloze
Their splendors thrilling and soothing,
Soothing to love's repose.

One kiss, and all the cosmos
Melts to a flaming fire—
Thou art that flame so living
The flame of my desire.

One kiss, and our beings mingle,
Mingle and grow as one,
For love's own kiss has joined us—
Souls that were two are one.

CARLTON STUART.



HIS GREATEST FEAR

"MY child, Lord Topnotch seems very fond of you."
"Yes. He said last night that he must speak to papa quick, as his weakness for me might cripple his business instincts."



GOING ON FOREVER

FIRST PATIENT—What makes you think my trouble is incurable?
SECOND PATIENT—I heard that you had a permanent income.

THE MAJOR AND I

By Tom Masson

THE major and I had always been good friends. For one thing, we both liked the same kind of a cigar.

"A cigar," said the major, "should be neither too good nor too bad. If a man gets into the habit of smoking bad cigars, not only is he a continued source of regret to his friends, but, graver still, he experiences a moral deterioration that no amount of pious influence can offset. If his cigars are too good, on the other hand, he is obliged to live up to them. I began once to smoke a fifty-cent cigar a day—only one. At first it was a difficult financial adjustment. Then my mind got used to it—so used to it that I began to smoke two—then three. For some time afterward I was puzzled to know why I never seemed to have any cash in hand, until it dawned upon me that I was making a steady glow of my bank account."

At the time I met the major we were both on the same twenty-cent brand, and this being enough to insure our confidence in each other, we became friends, and it was not long after this when by mutual consent we arranged to have our apartments next to each other.

This arrangement was a great success. Each one of us rubbed away the loneliness of the other, and we did it without any irritating consequences. There were moments of reminiscence, of reverie, when I saw that the major must not be disturbed. He divined the same of me. During these intervals we protected each other from the outside world. And during those other intervals, when we felt the need of com-

panionship, it seemed as if I had just what the major needed and the major had just what I needed.

I was somewhat older than the major. He was fifty and I was thirty, but age is never fully expressed in years. It is in feeling. I have never been able to be sure about the exact time when I caught up with the major, but I think it must have been when I was twenty and he forty. I feel sure that, if we had met then, we should not have agreed. We should have been too much alike.

At present, however, there was enough difference between us to insure a fortunate combination. The major was a perfect child about business matters, while I had a keen sense of those important details. He never thought of doing anything without consulting me. On the other hand, his sense of true human relationship was very much finer than mine. He taught me the art of dealing with my fellow-men. He taught me, or at least made me a student of, that rare art of gentle courtesy which in these days we seem to lack; and I learned from him that amid the wear and tear of modern life it is still possible to retain one's simplicity of character.

One day the major said to me:

"My friend, we must go to the seashore. We need the change. It will do us both good."

So I made all the necessary arrangements, and together we went. We selected a quiet spot on the Maine coast. Alas! since then I have learned this axiom: that there is no quiet spot anywhere upon the face of the earth that does not contain at least one widow.

I well remember the day she burst upon us in all the subdued splendor of her pony-cart. The ponies were black, the harness was black, the widow's clothes were black. But in strong contrast to her surroundings was the shining face of the widow.

I looked into the major's eyes and he looked into mine. I must confess that I saw something that startled me. I know now that if there is such a thing as love at first sight for one, it holds equally good for two. In an instant I realized that the major and I were in love—and with the same woman.

The next day we met her. Some change in the outgoing and incoming guests put us at a new table. There she was, radiant, demure, smiling. In the afternoon we had a three-cornered conversation at the shady end of the piazza.

Did the widow object to cigars? Never! She doted upon them. So between us the major and I consumed eighty cents' worth of them.

As we made our toilet before dinner, the major was more silent than usual. So indeed was I. It seemed to me that I was being drawn into a vortex from which there was no escape. The widow's eyes haunted me. An atmosphere of gentle, pathetic experience surrounded her, and through it she seemed transfigured into an angel. I was fearful lest she might prefer the major to me, and fearful lest she shouldn't. Indeed, so much I admired and esteemed my friend that I knew she would be lowered in my opinion should she prefer me. On the other hand, how could I now live without her? It was indeed a problem.

Finally the major spoke, laying his hands upon my shoulders in the old familiar manner when he was much moved. There were tears in his eyes. For this kindly old soul, who had fought undaunted through a score of battles, was as sentimental as a child.

"My boy," he said, "that widow has captured me. The moment I saw her I realized that all was lost. And yet as I look into your face I perceive that all is not right with you. Let

us be men. Let us meet this issue together. Speak, my boy!"

I also was much moved. "Major," I said, "you have read my secret aright. I, too, am heels over head in love with the widow. Do you blame me?"

It was a trying moment. Both of us realized instinctively what it meant. We had both in a very large sense become necessary to each other. I could not conceive of life without the major—and the widow. And I saw too plainly that he was thinking of the same thing—he could not conceive of life without me—and the widow.

"My boy," said the major at last, "I have a plan. Of course, I don't blame you. You could not have been the friend to me that you are if you had not done the same thing. The mere fact that we have fallen in love with the same woman only proves that we have not been mistaken in each other."

"What is your plan?" I asked, with breathless anxiety.

"It is this. We must divide the widow up. You have her one day, and I the next. Between friends such as we are, it is the only way. We'll draw lots for the first choice, and after that may the best man win!"

"It was just what I knew you would do!" I exclaimed, embracing him. Our glasses touched.

"Major," I said solemnly, "I drink to your success!" And the major's voice quivered as he replied:

"And I, my boy—to yours!"

The major won the toss, and the next morning I bade him farewell for the day and evening.

Never have I passed a more miserable time. Faithful to my promise I kept in the background, but in the distance I caught glimpses of the widow and the major, and it was quite evident to me that he was losing no time. But all things have an end, and the hour came for us to meet again.

There was a new light in the major's eyes. "My boy," he said solemnly,

"I will keep my promise. Tomorrow is yours."

The next day I arose bright and early, while the major kept to his room.

I realized that I must do my best or the major never would forgive me. Besides, once within the widow's spell I could not help myself. With years and endurance on my side, why should I not win? I consoled myself with the thought that if I did the major could live with us.

Shall I ever forget that day? It stands out in my memory like a ray of sunshine in a world of gloom. And as it wore on I felt that the widow and I were drawing nearer to each other all the time. And then at ten o'clock

that evening in the gloomiest corner of the piazza—I won her.

It was some two hours later that I went up to the major. He was waiting for me, puffing one of our cigars in deep reverie. He rose with his old affectionate manner to greet me. It was hard—harder than I ever dreamed. But I saw the best way was to tell the truth—after all, we were both men.

"Major," I said solemnly, "it's all over. The widow has accepted me."

"When?" said the major.

"Tonight—an hour ago."

The major smiled a peculiar smile I had never seen before.

"That's nothing, my boy," he said drily; "she did the same thing to me—last night."



"YOURS TILL DEATH"

NAY, dear, such brief protesting hath no grace
Of me! And since for us love's lightest breath
Is contraband, turn swift away thy face;
Give life to other women, but be mine in death!

MARTHA GILBERT DICKINSON BIANCHI.



ALARMING THOUGHT

WIFE—Don't you think we'd better ask those young people to dinner?
You know they are sweet on each other.

HUSBAND—I wouldn't think of such a thing. Why, we'll get so well acquainted with them that we'll have to give them a wedding present.



"I HEAR there are American colonies in London and Paris."
"That's nothing. I believe there's one in New York."

THE HENCHMAN

DEATH came close to the bed—
 Silent, commanding, grim.
 The poet turned, in his pain,
 And smiled at him.

"You drank life deep," said Death,
 "And now will you taste of me?
 For I hold the deeper cup
 Of Eternity.

"Revel, and love, and pain—
 You have suffered and sung them all!
 Your fame is where millions pass,
 Where shy birds call.

"Strong men laugh with your mirth,
 And women weep, at your whim;
 But I"—(and the mirthless one
 Bent over him)—

"But I, 'twixt breath and breath,
 Can rob you of all," he said;
 And he laid his heavy hand
 On the quiet bed.

The lights were shaded and low.
 A strange mist swam in the room,
 And the man could see Death's eyes
 Haunting the gloom.

He said, "I know you, my friend—
 God's henchman, and nothing more!
 If He has sent you, why, then
 Open the door!"

THEODORE ROBERTS.



A QUESTION OF HONOR

SLIMSON—What was the trouble between you and the little boy next door?
 WILLIE—He said he was a worse boy than I was.

THE STAGE AT THE PRESENT MOMENT

By David Belasco

I WISH that it were in my power to write as enthusiastically of the American stage as I should like to do, but it would take an optimist indeed, and a base prevaricator at that, to throw a roseate hue over the theatrical situation in America as it stands at the present time.

No better illustration of the despondent situation of the stage to-day could be given than the state of mingled panic and pandemonium which actors and managers alike are in at the present time—the eve of a new season which contains a Presidential election, a period which has always proved disastrous to theatricals. The managers, with ten theatres on their hands where they had one formerly, are panic-stricken at the paucity of attractions, and the actors who formerly were accustomed to sign their contracts early in June for the new season find themselves at large in shoals, with little prospect of any engagement until after the Presidential contest is over and the country has settled down again to the even tenor of its theatre-going way. One of the most prominent managers in this country, who has been in the habit of sending out from twenty to thirty companies every season, recently announced that for the future he intends to engage actors for the run of a play only. To the actors this means a tremendous difference, of course, but even that seems by comparison a detail to the crucial situation which stares the manager in the face. The goose that laid the golden egg is at its last gasp.

The foreign play-market for the past two years has proved an almost total

failure. Some years ago, in an attempt to corner the foreign play-market, an American manager made the fatal mistake of putting nearly all the foreign playwrights under contract. Worse than that, he paid liberal sums in advance for the option on all their dramatic output. Now anyone who knows anything about writers in general knows that they are proverbially lazy. With their extravagant advance fees safely tucked away in the bank, these playwrights have suddenly lost their enthusiasm for work. Those of them who have continued to work have turned out plays far below their standard. Some of these plays, on the strength of their authors' reputations, have enjoyed short runs, but the bitter experiences of last winter have made the American managers chary of producing plays which have not made enduring successes abroad. And the real hits of the past season in London and Paris could easily be counted on the fingers of one hand. Besides, on the other hand, the day has gone by when America will applaud or flock to see a play simply because Paris has lauded it or London has raved about it.

To my mind the most hopeful feature of the theatrical situation in America is the great spirit of independence and discrimination which the public has shown lately with regard to theatrical attractions. For the managers, to be sure, it has been a bitter experience, but it has taught them, I think, a much needed lesson. They realize that the public is no longer to be taken in by "flubdub"; the bitter truth has been borne in on many of us that the dear old public will no

longer swallow buncombe whole. For four or five years the country enjoyed a period of exceptional prosperity. The people were more or less theatre-mad. Plays good, bad and indifferent attracted large audiences, their managers made money hand over fist. But with last season the tide turned.

The first victim, and the one that most richly deserved its fate, was the badly dramatized novel. The public absolutely refused to swallow any more of these crude and inchoate concoctions dramatized overnight and literally chucked upon the stage after a couple of weeks' rehearsals.

The next in line to suffer was the made-to-order star—the man or woman who, after one or two successes in leading roles, suddenly blossomed out as a would-be arc-light in the theatrical firmament.

If the past disastrous season has done nothing else it has at least reduced these two theatrical impositions to their proper level. And I make this statement in all kindness, too, for no one knows better than I of the ceaseless toil, the unselfish devotion, the indomitable perseverance and the heart-breaking setbacks which many actresses and some few actors are experiencing in their sincere struggles to reach the top of the ladder and to maintain their position there. After an experience of thirty years in theatrical matters—an experience which has covered all the ground from call-boy to actor and from prompter to playwright—I can lay my hand on my heart and say that, leaving genius aside, after all it is work and perseverance alone which tell in this most erratic of professions. No woman can become a great actress who has not drunk deeply and often of life's waters of marah, and no playwright can achieve permanent distinction who is not an indefatigable student of human nature. What tears and heartache do for the actress the ups and downs of everyday life ought to do for the playwright.

The other day I heard a man of position in theatricals gravely assert that the day of the temperamental actor

was gone. The public no longer wanted emotion but preferred lay figures who could counterfeit the emotions with which the playwright had imbued them in a fitting but quite mechanical manner.

Unconsciously, perhaps, that man put his finger on one of the most fatal mistakes which stage managers are making on our stage today. When temperament dies out and mechanism steps in we may as well star marionettes in our theatres at once. Kill temperament and you kill the public's interest in the theatre. A charming personality will carry a marionette far, but without temperament to back it up it will leave the man or woman just on the wrong side of permanent success. I would not pay fifteen dollars a week for the services of an actor or an actress who would guarantee to give exactly the same performance for a hundred nights. The one great point which I always strive to impress on the actors in my companies is to assert their own individuality in their performances. I am perfectly free to confess that some of the finest bits of business I have ever had in my plays have been suggested by some chance gesture or speech which one of my actors has made at rehearsal. Actors, after all, are in many senses grown-up children. You can't drive them; they must be humored. And that is one reason why I say that I would give as little for an untemperamental actor as I would for a stage manager who had not a streak of diplomacy and a strong sense of humor.

Stage management, as a matter of fact, is an art in itself. To achieve success as a stage manager a man must have a wider range of knowledge and acquirements than in any other profession that I know. The low level of the acting on our stages today is due to the fact that we as a theatrical nation are absolutely poverty-stricken in the matter of stage managers. In America the business manager, longing for more artistic laurels than the box-office receipts afford him, has usurped the seat of the stage director. It is to this

fact that I think the appalling ignorance and crudity displayed in many performances are due. The poor actors, badgered and frowned down until every shred of confidence or individuality has left them, not daring to call their souls their own, speak and move entirely as this man dictates. Every speech is studied, every gesture rehearsed until it has lost all trace of spontaneity, and then the poor actor wakes up the morning after the first performance to read that the critics consider him a wooden and mechanical actor! This description is true not of one or two performances, but of at least fifty productions which are brought out in New York in the course of a season. The blame lies not at the actor's door, but at the stage janitor's—for that in my opinion is what many of our managers amount to today: millionaire janitors, if you will, but still *janitors*, for of the glory of the actor's art, the pride in his profession which every true artist always displays, they know nothing. Indeed, they rather pride themselves upon the fact that the money which they have made out of the actor's toil enables them to look down upon the actor as an individual of a distinctly lower grade.

The stage in America today is stagnant on account of the commercial spirit which has been introduced into its dealings during the last six or seven years. No one appreciates and deplores this fact more than the actors themselves—and no one—more's the pity—is so afraid to say so. If the actors are under a yoke of commercial tyranny today they have themselves to blame for it. There was a time seven years ago, when the Theatrical Syndicate was first formed, that Messrs. Joseph Jefferson, Nat Goodwin, Richard Mansfield, Francis Wilson and W.

H. Crane, by merely standing shoulder to shoulder, could have nipped the scheme in its bud. Today, much as any of them privately and unofficially may bemoan this fact, there isn't one of them who doesn't jump when the Syndicate pulls the string. For all the independence which these actors and their managers now assert, they might be so many inanimate displays in the window of a department store, and as a matter of fact their artistic careers are now run almost entirely on department store methods.

The independent manager who dares to make a production on his own account is now almost as extinct as the dodo bird. No matter how great a success his play may prove in New York, unless he concedes to the demands of the Syndicate's booking agents his chances for success on the road are absolutely nil. Five years ago there were at least fifteen or twenty managers in the habit of bringing out from two to three independent productions every year. Where are they today? Either in retirement, in bankruptcy or filling subordinate positions in the Syndicate employ.

Understand me, as a manager I can be quite as commercial as anyone else. No one in the business is more eager to draw audiences to his theatres than I am; no one, I take it, is more desirous of gathering in phenomenal box-office receipts; but when the day ever dawns that I am compelled either by misfortune or the Syndicate to regard my theatre, my productions and my stars purely as commercial commodities, then I shall at least seek the seclusion which some other line of commercial industry might grant me. Under such conditions the theatrical game would scarcely be worth the scandal.



TIMID CONTRIBUTOR—Did you get a manuscript tied up with a blue ribbon?

EDITOR (to boy)—Jim, look over the remnants.

FULFILMENT

"*Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief!*"

ALL in an hour this youthful prophecy
 Read on my ragged jacket comes to pass.
 The sibyl was Chloise, and it is she
 That shows me now a Proteus in my glass.
 Bonds and securities—I've these to get!
 The limit of my wealth is soon defined,
 I give no largess—save of love—and yet
 I am a *rich man* when Chloise is kind.

Though I've confessed to poverty, I boast
 An opulence mere riches can't outvie!
 Health, hopefulness, of friends a merry host,
 A very Cæsar in these things am I!
 But when Chloise plays miser with her smiles,
 And makes her rosy tongue a tiny scourge,
 Though blossoms bower my way and song beguiles
 I am a *poor man* at starvation's verge!

The next step downward's guessed, and easily;
 The starving man, should he not perish soon,
 Turns mendicant and finds humility
 A winning power where pride has lost the boon.
 So when Chloise laughs at, ignores my wants,
 I pocket all my pride—well, all I *can!*—
 My riches quite forgotten for the nonce,
 Behold in me a humble *beggar man!*

And if Chloise still obdurate remains,
 Proclaims me an impostor and denies
 That which she would not miss; which through my veins
 Would send the red blood coursing torrent-wise;
 If then she gives me opportunity
 By turning her dear back upon my grief,
 My downfall is complete. Ah! pity me
 That I should come at last to be a *thief!*

EDWARD W. BARNARD.

HUSBAND—What! four weeks at that summer resort! Why, last year you were satisfied with two.

WIFE—But, darling, I am so much stronger this year.

WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF CONSTANTINE DIX

By Barry Pain

I HAVE already disclaimed any overmastering ambitions. I care nothing about the coup for its own sake. There are men who seek out the difficult coup, just as an artist may intentionally seek difficulties of subject or treatment in a story or picture. I prefer easy work, when I can get it. Nor has wealth any such charms for me that I would take absurd risks to obtain it. For years past an annual income of £2,000 has satisfied me. I live regularly, and am aware that any sudden increase of means and expenditure with nothing to account for it is likely to render one an object of suspicion. All thieves know this, but comparatively few can bring themselves to act upon it.

Take, for instance, the case of Ikey. He is not unintelligent. As an inspector of an Electric Lighting Company he is admirable. He carries a notebook with the right name and address of the company stamped in gold on its morocco cover, and the book is partly filled with notes and figures that would deceive anybody except an electrician. He carries a printed card of authorization and a little brown bag with apparatus in it. The apparatus consists of a compass, a screw-driver and two coils of bell-wire, so it is not remarkably electrical. But it suffices; in fact, Ikey has said to me that no servant in London is able to doubt him after he has once opened that bag and produced the bell-wire. He knows nothing whatever of electricity. He told one old lady in Berkeley Square that the *ampère* wanted cleaning, and he was

afraid he would have to unscrew the volts. But he knows when it is best for him to look very serious and to say very little. In this way he has in one morning cleared a thousand pounds' worth of diamonds from a good house in the West End. Naturally, the "fence" gave him rather less than one-tenth of this sum, but it was too much for Ikey. He could not resist new clothes, some showy jewelry and an inclination to stand drinks freely and to brag of his coup. So, of course, the police got him.

There have been times when I have undertaken an adventure of considerable risk for the sake of considerable profit. There was, for instance, the case of the Manton-on-Sea branch of Appleby, Hanson & Lane's Bank. I had just purchased my motor-car, one of my three banking accounts was very low, and I did not wish to realize investments. The risks were great, but they were not absurd; the branch was in temporary premises at the time, and one or two other accidental circumstances were in my favor. It was merely necessary for me to drug three people, and I did it. The manager himself was a teetotaler, and as earnest and God-fearing a man as ever I saw; but he was a bit of a hypochondriac, and quite ready to try my new medicine. I felt sorry for him at the time. The amount in gold was much less than I had expected, and I did not care to touch the notes, but, on the whole, I was fairly satisfied. Still, I avoid such work as a rule. The only way by which I care to open a good safe or

strong room is by its own proper keys, and too many accidents are possible in getting and using them.

That business with the bank then turned out more easy than I had expected. Frequently the reverse has been the case. I have taken on something that looked perfectly soft and simple, and have given weeks of time and thought before I could bring it to a successful issue. This was the case with the miser of Darwen village.

I was staying at Brighton at the time, and in the course of a long walk I stopped for rest and refreshment at the Crown Inn at Darwen. It is a quiet and old-fashioned inn, with a comfortable and sleepy landlord. As I sat chatting with my host, a little old man of strange appearance came in. He was very dirty and very ragged. He had a timid and watery eye and thin lips pressed tightly together. His rags were not those that would have been worn by a laborer, nor was his appearance that of one of the laboring class. His voice, as I noticed when he spoke, was that of a man of refinement and education.

"Good morning, Mr. Jacobs," said the landlord, with something like a wink in my direction, as though to bid me watch what would happen.

"Good morning, sir," said the old man. "A beautiful morning for walking, though the air is somewhat chilly. I have called in because I have a present to make you. I wish to give you something."

The landlord grinned good-humoredly. The little old man dived into the pocket of his shabby gray overcoat and pulled out two large apples.

"There, sir!" he said. "I should not say it, but they are beautiful fruit. You will find nothing like them in Darwen. And I will trouble you for six-pennyworth of brandy."

The landlord, still grinning, put the apples on a shelf, and measured out the old man's drink. Mr. Jacobs had, with the apples, pulled out an empty clay pipe, gazed at it and then up at the ceiling.

"There is some delicious tobacco

being smoked in this room," he said reflectively. "I like to drink in its fragrance for a minute or two before I spoil it with my pipeful of a ranker and cheaper variety. The poor must not expect too much. I have always maintained that the poor are wrong when they expect too much."

I was the only man in the room who was smoking, and I passed my pouch over to him.

"Thank you, sir," he said. "I did not intend to trespass upon you in this way—nothing was further from my thoughts. Still, as you so kindly insist, I will partake."

He filled his clay pipe, and palmed some more of the tobacco when he thought that he was unobserved. He lighted his pipe with a match from the stand and, in an absent-minded way, slid a few of the matches into his pocket. Then he turned to the landlord. "And how much am I indebted to you, sir, for this refreshment?"

"Why, nothing, Mr. Jacobs. Surely, if I accept your presents, I may offer you a friendly glass."

"If you wish it, let it be so. You are very kind. The world is in many respects better than the cynics would have us believe. There are still great and generous hearts. Good morning to both of you."

He went out, and the landlord immediately burst out laughing.

"That's a queer old chap," I said.

"He is," said the landlord. "They call him the miser of Darwen. He is worth twenty-five thousand pounds, so they say, and he lives alone in a cottage that isn't fit to keep a dog in. I have never seen a penny of his money in my life. He brings fruit or he brings vegetables, and goes through the same bit of play-acting that you saw just now. Of course, I don't want his apples; everybody has got more apples than they can give away this year. It's the same with all his presents, but I don't care. The old chap always makes me laugh, and it's dull enough in a little place like this. Besides, he can't last much longer, and who knows but what he may remember me? He

tried the same game on at the Blue Boar, bottom of the village, but the chap there wouldn't have it. Did you twig him sneaking your 'baccy?"

This was interesting. I got the landlord to tell me all he knew about Jacobs. He was, it appeared, in receipt of an annuity of two pounds a week, and for the last thirty years, so the villagers computed, he had never spent more than six shillings a week. His garden and cottage were his own freehold; the cottage was in a most wretched condition, but he refused to spend a penny on it. Once a year—the villagers said it was on his birthday—he would give a child a penny to whiten the step in front of his door, and for weeks afterward would avoid using that step. But with this exception he did everything for himself. Sometimes he even earned a little money. He was, the landlord said, a scholar, and had written letters for people in the village in cases where a noble and correct style was felt to be worth a penny a page. He had no bank account, and it was supposed that his savings were hidden in his cottage, which he would never leave for more than a quarter of an hour at a time. "Not that he need trouble himself," said the landlord, "for we are all honest in Darwen. Like to see the old chap's shanty? It's only just across the road there."

All of this seemed to me to be particularly good. There would be no twenty-five thousand, of course, but there would be a sum very well worth taking, and, so it seemed at the time, very easy to take. I told the landlord that I should stop at his inn for a day or two. I did not think so simple a business could possibly take longer. In reality, I stopped there a month and was compelled to neglect my reformation work in London in a way that I greatly regretted. However, I went back there at the end of that month with renewed health and strength from my holiday in the country—and with something else besides.

The next time I encountered Jacobs was again in the bar of the Crown.

He had presented, with great solemnity, three exceedingly small potatoes, and had ordered a pint of old ale very much as if he had had an intention of paying for it. It was easy enough to get into conversation with him; he himself began it.

"I cannot but remember you, sir. That one little pipe of your excellent tobacco has been fragrant in my memory ever since."

I renewed his acquaintance with it, and asked him if he could tell me of anyone in the village who would call in the evening to take my letters to the post, and could do neat and legible copying.

"Might I inquire what the terms would be?"

I satisfied him on this point, and he turned the matter over in his own mind. The post-office was a full mile from his own cottage, but the copying work which I had added by way of bait attracted him.

"I am, sir," he said, "a bachelor of arts of the University of Oxford. I admit that I do not look it, but it is the case. I shall be pleased to undertake the copying on the terms you suggest, and any passer-by will always be willing to post your letters for you."

I explained to him that this would not do; it was essential that my letters should be posted by a responsible person—someone whom I could trust, not a chance person who might lose them or forget them or stay to talk on the way and thus miss the post. Finally, though with some apparent misgiving, he gave way.

The lock on the cottage door presented no difficulties. I went all over the place that night while Jacobs was away at the post. It was a three-room cottage, standing in a small garden with a few fruit trees at the back. It looked disreputable enough on the outside. The roof was crazy and half covered with ivy. Windows were patched and gutters broken. Clouds of flies hovered over the fetid green water in the butt at the corner of the house. On the other hand, the garden was well-kept and cultivated. There

were no flowers there; the miser grew nothing that he could not eat. And the interior of the cottage surprised me. It was more tidy and clean than I had expected. What little furniture there was seemed, for the most part, to have been made by the miser himself from old packing-cases. There were hanging book-shelves on the walls, and the books in them were all classical. In fact, I found the *Phædo* lying open on the kitchen table. But I did not find any trace of the hidden treasure. After three more visits I came to the conclusion that it could not be in the cottage at all. I had probed and examined everywhere, and it could not have escaped me. So I gave up the cottage and tried the garden. It seemed to me quite likely that the old man buried his money; his gardening operations would provide a useful cover for it.

I learned that garden by heart. I knew every inch of it, and day after day I waited to see if there was any disturbance of the soil that might give me a clue. Hidden by the high hedge at the further end, I watched the old man at work there. I tried the trunks of the fruit trees, to see if they could be used as a hiding place. All was in vain. The miser's gardening was of the most ordinary and genuine description, and his trees were all solid. I had gone into this matter as if it were child's play, and it was giving me far more trouble than the bank's local branch had done. I took to watching the place at night, and all that I could discover was that the old man slept from five to nine with the utmost regularity. I began to think that the money could not be there at all. But I had assured myself of the existence of the annuity, and that Jacobs did not spend the money, and that he did not bank it. Where, then, could it be?

I might have remained in ignorance to this day if it had not been for the fact that one afternoon a sandy-colored gutter-cat went to sleep on the path just outside the miser's garden gate. She awoke as a group of boys came along from school, and slipped through

into the garden. The foremost boy sent a stone after her, and missed her. The stone struck the water butt. I had witnessed the little incident, and I now knew where Jacobs kept his savings. The sound the stone made was not what it would have been if the butt had been full of water—as it apparently was, and as I had always supposed it to be. I went back to the inn, had a cup of tea, and wrote a reply to a letter I had received from my friend, the Rev. Arthur Hope, asking when he could see me in town about a poor family in which we were both interested. I was able to give him an appointment for two days later.

That night I sent Jacobs off with my letter to the post, and made an examination. The butt consisted of a large barrel standing on end, and divided just above the bung-hole into two parts. The upper part was filled with water. The money was kept in the lower part. The bung was easily removed, but I could not get my hand in. With my stick I could feel down onto a concrete floor heaped with coins.

I was in no hurry now. I went back to my rooms and thought the thing over. The old fool had used this place with success for years, and had probably grown very confident about it. He dropped his sovereigns through the bung-hole, and loved to think how they were accumulating. It was the only pleasure money could give him. Every miser is a madman. If I had taken the hoard that night it is quite possible he would never have discovered his loss. But if he did it was also quite likely that suspicion would fall on me. To divert it, I should have had to remain in the place for some time longer and to have continued the farce of giving him employment. This would have been very tiresome to me. So I left for London the following morning, without the money.

About six weeks later I was stopping at my Brighton house, and I thought I might as well walk over to Darwen one night. I chose a dark night, and took precautions to establish an alibi if one should prove necessary. At the

time that I was walking to Darwen my household was convinced that I was asleep in bed.

I had at first intended to cut a hole through the barrel and get the money that way. But I gave up this idea; it would have made it quite certain that the miser would discover his loss. The method I chose was to fish out the money. It was the more tedious way, but it would leave no immediate evidence that the hoard had been disturbed; and, if nothing were found out, it might be worth my while to try the same thing again in a year or two.

I do not know why, but I was very nervous about this simple affair—possibly because it had given me so much trouble at the outset. For instance, I had provided myself with a loaded line and a tin of birdlime, but I decided that these things came within the category of suspicious apparatus. I took with me instead a bottle of my hair-dresser's "Mustacheoline." This is an innocent preparation for dressing the mustache. It is a fluid, but on exposure to the air it becomes hard and intensely sticky.

Half a mile outside Darwen I left the road and took to the fields. I approached Jacobs's cottage from the back. The whole place was as still as a little village generally is at midnight. I had cut a little sprig of furze and tied it to the end of a string. I smeared this with the preparation, and attached to it the seal I wore on my watch-chain to serve as a weight. Then I knelt beside the water butt, and lowered my line through the bung-hole. The first time I got four sovereigns, and the second time three. Once or twice a coin fell back on the heap just as I was raising it, and I would wait a minute or two until I was sure that the chink had not by any chance been heard. It was a slow and laborious business, and all the time I was most unaccountably timid and jumpy. When I had got two hundred and fifty I gave up, though I was nothing like at the end of the heap.

I got back home without an ad-

venture of any kind, but when I met a policeman in Brighton street I nearly jumped out of my skin, and though I was dead tired when I got home, I was too excited to sleep. I was thoroughly ashamed of myself, and if my nerves often gave way like this I should at once choose some other means of providing for myself. I believe in proper precautions, and I despise the recklessness which sooner or later is sure to end in detection. But when once the plan is made and the decision taken, there should be calm presence of mind in its execution, and this I had not shown. I record my weakness, because in these pages I wish to give the truth without self-glorification.

A week later, finding that Jacobs had apparently never discovered his loss, I walked into Darwen and had a talk with him. He was just going into the Crown, and had a small cauliflower with him. He seemed a little hurt that the landlord did not show more enthusiasm about that cauliflower, but otherwise he was quite happy. I felt that I had done a good action. He was none the worse and I was two hundred and fifty pounds the better. Money was meant to be used.

In the course of the next year I paid two other nocturnal visits to Mr. Jacobs's water butt. On the first occasion, when I was interrupted, I took thirty pounds, and on the next day, when I was able to give more time to it, I secured three hundred and eighty. On both of these occasions I was pleased to find that my nerves were in their normal condition. With this I was satisfied, though I might have gone back yet again but for the poor old man's sudden death from double pneumonia. In his will he left a statement of the sum that would be found in the bottom of the water butt, and this was discovered by his executors to be quite inaccurate. There was a shortage of six hundred and sixty pounds, a sum for which they will, if they ever read my memoirs, now be able to account. As it was, they decided that the old man must have hidden this money elsewhere, and forgotten all about it. They searched the

house and the garden with the utmost thoroughness; the whole of the garden was dug up and the cottage was nearly pulled down. And even then, when the property came into the market, it fetched twice its proper value, as the purchaser believed that he had a chance of finding the missing six hundred and sixty.

Jacobs's executors were his solicitors, and, after their expenses had been paid, the rest of his money went to his old college, St. Cecilia's, at Oxford. His college had refused him the fellowship which he confidently expected, and since that time he had had no connection with it. There was no reason why he should have left his money there, and I was glad that I had been

able to rescue six hundred and sixty of it from aiding an institution for providing a classical and useless education. Not one penny was left to the landlord of the Crown who had frequently and in many ways befriended the old miser.

I am not accustomed to feel remorse for any theft that I may commit. I am a born thief; I thieve very well; theft is a thing, as I have said, that I do best and like best. But it is seldom that I can look back on any of my operations with the immense satisfaction that this has given me. Jacobs was not a man who in a really civilized country would have been allowed to possess any money at all, and my only regret is that I did not take more.



FOR ONE WHO LOVES TOO MUCH

AFTER MENDES

I AM the bird that sings and goes,
You are the rosebush spray;
And you are wild, while I am gay,
I am the song, you are the rose.

I mock and laugh, but yet—who knows?—
Your rose-bloom may be mine today;
I am the bird that sings and goes,
You are the rosebush spray.

But if some stormy tempest blows
And, as your branches bend and sway,
Tears rudely your pure bloom away,
Ask not my grief for you, my rose—
I am the bird that sings and goes.

WILL McCOURTIE.



THE woman who is a heroine to her maid is greater than any valeted hero.

LA COUPE

Par Paul et Victor Margueritte

LA CRAVACHE sous le bras, bien pris dans l'habit rouge étoffant le buste et pinçant la taille, Jacques de Crétonne, en boutonnant son gant, inspecta, d'un bref coup d'œil satisfait, l'éclat de sa culotte blanche et de ses bottes vernies. Très chic! Une espèce d'uniforme qui lui allait aussi bien que l'autre, celui sous lequel, sanglé dans sa veste de lieutenant de chasseurs, il avait triomphé, hier, au Championnat du cheval d'armes...

Il honora d'un regard circulaire et bienveillant l'assistance coutumière, le petit monde d'officiers, de sportsmen, de snobs, qui, derrière la tribune du comité, agitait son va-et-vient élégant, groupes bourdonnants sillonnés de chevaux, qu'amenaient, tenaient par la bride des soldats d'ordonnance, des valets d'écurie à lèvre et menton rasés...

— Tiens! Un tel... bonjour!...
— Comment va, d'Espars?... — Mon général!...

Du bout des doigts, d'un hochement de tête familier, de la brusque immobilisation d'un salut militaire, Jacques de Crétonne accueillait, prévenait chacun, à l'amusant hasard des rencontres, dans ce mouvement de foule choisie, cette atmosphère fiévreuse un peu, qui faisait penser à une attente de coulisses, dans un décor.

Et c'était une rumeur d'immense théâtre qui, sous les vastes coupes vitrées, élevait cet indistinct brouhaha, montant de tout le gigantesque rectangle des tribunes, étagées, noires de monde, autour de l'étendue de la piste. Il flottait, dans le jour ora-

geux des grands vitrages, dans cette clarté comme artificielle, une espèce d'électricité humaine, où se mêlait, au parfum léger des toilettes claires, l'odeur, sensible à peine, mais spéciale, des cirques.

Cette idée: l'Hippique, cirque parisien, mondain par excellence, et qu'il en était, lui, Jacques-Pierre-Aimé de Crétonne, un des acteurs en vogue, une seconde, le traversa, divertissante. Et, aussitôt, il en savoura un orgueil plus vif. C'était aujourd'hui une des sensationnelles épreuves, ce prix de la Coupe, qu'il s'agissait d'enlever en un parcours sans fautes... De tout son désir énervé, de tout son amour-propre tendu, il hâta l'instant de s'enlever en selle, d'apparaître, dans la piste nue, hérissée d'obstacles...

Un coup de cloche. Le son bien connu, qui suspend ou clôt les parcours... Jacques de Crétonne l'entend retentir, en pleine chair... Il consulte le programme: Numéro 15; deux tours encore... C'est que ce n'est pas seulement affaire professionnelle, l'agréable vanité d'un succès de plus. Non, aujourd'hui, son destin se décide. Ou plutôt il faut qu'il décide de son destin. Résolution prise de la veille, fermement arrêtée... Il ne peut tergiverser, hésiter plus longtemps... Henriette ou Angèle...

Il reçoit les deux sœurs telles qu'hier — comme il allait les saluer, après sa course, — elles l'ont troublé, enchanté, une fois de plus... La brune, la blonde... Si diverses, également jolies... Henriette, avec son teint mat, comme doré de soleils lointains, ses yeux bleus moqueurs, ses lourds cheveux noirs massés en bandeau souple,

sous la paille claire du chapeau de roses... Mais Angèle, Angèle plus svelte, plus mignonne encore, avec son visage si doux, son teint de fleur neigeuse, ses admirables cheveux d'or sombre... Il revoit, sous la toque de bleuets, l'air rêveur, le fin profil...

Et, perplexe, il songe: Laquelle?... Non point: Laquelle m'aime ou m'aimera?... Cela, c'est secondaire, cela viendra de soi, naturellement, après... Si, pour toutes deux, — il a un sourire fat, — cela n'est venu, déjà... Non, Jacques de Crétonne se dit seulement: "Voilà le moment, le bon moment de me marier... Trente-quatre ans, bientôt... Qu'est-ce que la vie de garçon m'apporterait de plus?... J'en connais, trop! les joies banales... Je suis payé, non, j'ai payé pour les connaître!... Qu'est-ce qu'il me reste? Une dizaine de mille livres de rente sur vingt-cinq... En revanche, heureusement, un coffre solide, et ce qu'on est convenu d'appeler un beau, hum! soyons modeste, un joli physique... Carrière assurée; capitaine l'an prochain, et avec mon âge, mes relations... Eh! eh! les deux étoiles... M^{me} la générale de Crétonne..."

Il se dit encore: "Excellent parti, que ces deux petites Talapoint-Burot. La famille est de la meilleure bourgeoisie industrielle et parlementaire; gens bien pensants, dot de trois cent mille, minimum, et les espérances... Oui, oui... Mais laquelle, laquelle aimé-je, aimerai-je davantage?... Alternatives, simultanées, les deux images charmantes surgissaient, emplissaient sa pensée. Il ne se pouvait détacher de l'une que pour se rattacher à l'autre. Toutes deux lui plaisaient infiniment. Il organisait sa vie future selon les yeux bleus d'Henriette, ou selon le lumineux regard marron d'Angèle, et s'il y prenait d'avance une identique joie, il ne savait, ne pouvait concevoir quelle plus grande peine lui causerait l'un des deux renoncements..."

La cloche encore. La rentrée d'un des habits rouges, genoux crispés au flanc de bête vibrante, secouant le mors... Les fanfares de trompes... Le cheminement hâtif des beaux mes-

sieurs et des belles dames, traversant la piste, pour gagner en hâte la tribune réservée... Cette fois, c'est à lui. Voici Mabel, que Lucas, son ordonnance, maintient, tête haute. La jument, inquiète, darde de droite et de gauche son gros œil rond. Campée sur ses pattes, la peau plissée de frémissements où le poil lustré s'argente, l'alezane bat, de sa queue longue de pur-sang.

Jacques de Crétonne, d'un geste machinal, vérifie la sangle, les étriers, tâte la gourmette. Il tente d'apaiser, à petites tapes amicales, le long de l'encolure soyeuse, la bête qui s'impatiente:

— Là! là! Mabel...

— J'sais pas c'quelle a, mon lieutenant, dit l'ordonnance, pesant sur l'étrier hors montoir. Elle ne fait que danser depuis une heure.

Mais déjà Jacques de Crétonne est en selle, rassemble Mabel, qui mâche le mors, détend nerveusement, à coups saccadés, l'encolure...

Là! là!... Jacques, de sa main douce et ferme, de ses longues jambes, maîtrise sa monture, reprend l'habituelle possession... Le cœur lui bat, à peine... Cette cloche ne sonnera donc pas?... Juste!... Les fanfares, le chapelet des retardataires qui s'égrenent, en travers de la piste... *Go ahead!*... Il dépasse la tribune de comité... Il est en plein cirque, sous la pesante clarté des vitrages, dans l'immense rectangle des tribunes, bondées de foule, où il ne distingue rien, d'abord, que les taches gaies des toilettes de femmes, une houle confuse de visages...

Maintenant son cœur a cessé de battre; il est très pâle, mais d'un absolu sang-froid, d'une lucidité entière, qui lui permet d'embrasser, d'un seul regard, tout le dispositif des obstacles, l'ensemble du parcours, tel détail des tribunes... Angèle et Henriette sont là, comme d'habitude, à droite de l'entrée, tribune des abonnés, premier rang... Et tout soudain s'évanouit, se fond dans une demi-conscience, à la fois obscure et très nette, où il agit. Il n'y a plus que lui, Mabel et l'obstacle.

...Hop! Il escalade la banquette,

dégringole son raide talus... Le tournant, déjà... Mabel galope à faux... Ah! la barre!... Hop! ça y est...

Les obstacles, un à un, surgissent, disparaissent... Attention!... le triple sautée... Parfait... Le tournant encore... La barre... Jacques, tranquille, exulte... Mabel, quoique un peu folle, a tous ses moyens... Pas une faute encore... Le plus dur est fait... Il ne reste que cette sacrée barrière de la fin, où les taquets ont toujours l'air de tomber exprès, et puis la haie... A moi, la coupe!...

Attention! la barrière... Mabel, excitée, gagne à la main... Hop!...

Une sensation d'éclair... Hein, quoi?... Elle a sauté trop court, enlevée d'un bond formidable, inutile... Les pattes de derrière qui accrochent... Mabel se reçoit mal, bute... Les genoux touchent... Crétonne à demi désarçonné, se voit à terre, ridicule, meurtri... Un murmure apitoyé, des cris d'effroi montent des tribunes proches, des femmes se penchent, tandis qu'au loin, indifférent, le grand brouhaha continue...

C'est fini. Le cœur percé, étouffant de rage, Crétonne mesure la partie perdue, remâche la déshonorante aventure... Mais déjà, d'un suprême élan, d'un instinctif effort, Mabel est debout, son cavalier par miracle resté, rétabli en selle. Hop! hop! au galop... La haie? franchie d'un saut splendide, et dans les bravos compensateurs, au bruit de la cloche et des fanfares,

Crétonne rentre, désolé... A d'autres la coupe. Du moins, l'honneur est sauf...

C'est ce qu'il se répète, deux heures après, en se dirigeant vers l'hôtel des Talapoint-Burot. Une irréprochable redingote grise, à la bouttonnière de violette de Parme, a remplacé l'habit rouge. Et Jacques de Crétonne se demande aussi: — Qu'est-ce qu'elles vont me dire? Il ne se l'avoue pas, sent pourtant bien que de l'accueil qu'elles lui vont faire, Angèle, Henriette—des événements, une décision, sa vie, qui sait? dépendent... L'escalier de marbre, le grand salon...

Ah! les voici... Henriette est assise dans la bergère Louis XVI... Angèle, appuyée à la cheminée, tourne le dos... Quelles sont jolies!... Crétonne, le cœur battant comme avant, plus qu'avant la course, ardemment, attend, souhaite qu'elles l'épargnent, compatissent... Henriette tend la main, en riant:

— Vous nous en avez fait, une belle peur!

— N'est-ce pas, dit Jacques.

A la vue du paisible, presque moqueur visage, un sentiment de recul, d'involontaire vexation, le saisit. Mais Angèle s'est retournée, murmure:

— J'espère que vous ne disputerez jamais plus ce vilain prix!

Et dans ce simple mot, dans la prière de la voix qui tremble un peu, Jacques subitement comprend. Sa défaite, c'est une victoire... Henriette? — Angèle! Il a choisi.



THE KIND SHE LIKED

VON BLUMER—Write a love letter to my wife and I'll sign it.
CLERK—What amount?



PEOPLE who live in stone houses should never throw glasses.

A FRAGMENT

SO dark—the rain is chill, the bitter wind
 The tree-top tears, my frail nest mocks and rends;
 Below, the birds sleep quiet, warm and safe
 Behind the sheltering hill; up near the sky
 The branches bend and snap—the wild storm takes
 My dwelling for a plaything; still it clings
 To the swaying bough; yet, though it bide or fall,
 Grieve not, my soul, that we have built so high.

ALLAN MUNIER.



WAYS AND MEANS

IT was a gathering of bohemians with a leaning toward respectability, and of respectability with a leaning toward bohemia. Someone, more philistine than the others, or actuated perhaps by a desire for psychological information, asked of the fair, young-girl novelist whose books were the talk of the week:

"How can a young girl of family and social position like yours bring it upon herself to write books no self-respecting matron wants to be seen reading?"

The maiden smiled sweetly without offense. "I find I must write indecent things if I wish to live decently," she answered.

In a corner sat the staid, middle-aged editor of a most respectable family weekly, the sort of thing all good church people and stanch supporters of law and order read.

"Lucky girl," he murmured, audible only to the group immediately surrounding him. "The case is different with me. I find I must write decent things if I want to live indecently."



URBS IN RURE

MR. SUBURBANITE—That grass is getting awfully long, my dear.

MR. SUBURBANITE—So I see. I'll have to have a guest out from town.

A NATURAL CONCLUSION

By Theodosia Garrison

IF it hadn't been for Mrs. Worthington I might never have known Billy. Of course I understand that two people destined for each other are bound to come together some day, but I might have been very old and lost my hair and worn an alpaca dress by then, and Billy might not have been the perfect god he is now. And Mrs. Worthington did introduce us in the little summer-house at Monmouth just before the dancing began, and I was wearing my highest heels and prettiest gown, so I really give more of the credit to her than to Fate.

Mrs. Worthington and I were never friends exactly. Of course she was very old—she must be thirty-five anyway—but we girls all admired her immensely. She was such a beautiful, mysterious-looking woman and wore such lovely gowns that trailed yards behind her, and she usually sat on the beach with a book when we bathed. She had the whitest skin, which never seemed to burn or freckle or tan like a commonplace person's, and the darkest eyes and reddest mouth I ever saw; and her face was very sad except when she smiled, and then it was wonderful—like an electric light switched on in a dark room. She didn't smile often, though, for she didn't seem to care for the people in the hotel. She told me once that she couldn't speak their language because she had no idea of the different embroidery stitches and had never undergone an operation, and they didn't care to talk about anything else.

Clarisse Gray's mother said that Mrs. Worthington's sadness was only a pose. She had a second cousin in New York

who knew her and wrote Mrs. Gray about her. The cousin said that Mrs. Worthington was extremely wealthy and people esteemed it a great honor to go to her teas; that she had a husband who was a drug-fiend and had been in a sanatorium for eight years, and she had no children to bother her; so of course there was no reason why she shouldn't be absolutely happy.

I was drying my hair on the beach one morning when she spoke to me and asked if I wouldn't come under her beach-umbrella, and said that I had the prettiest hair she had ever seen, and, of course, I liked her very much and we chatted until the gong rang for luncheon.

She laughed a great deal that morning. I don't know why, for we talked about serious things like literature and happiness and religion. She was reading a book by an Italian with a long name—d'Annunzio, I believe—and she asked me if I had read it, and I told her no; that I didn't care for Italian literature. We had to read Dante in school and it was perfectly awful, and I asked her what this book was like, and she said it was like smelling incense burning in a black, rotting swamp. It seemed such a strange way to describe a book. She asked me who my favorite author was, and I told her that I thought The Duchess wrote the most beautiful love scenes in the world, and she said that she had no doubt that that was true. Then she looked at me and laughed, and asked me if I would tell her what my idea of real happiness was. I suppose she thought I was an awfully silly little thing because I told her that I thought to go

to the matinee with a chum and a big box of caramels was the most adorable thing in the world—a real sad play that made you cry was the kind I liked best, because the caramels always seemed so comforting between the acts.

Oh, we talked a long time, and she really seemed to like me very much. I thought she was lovely, though I didn't quite understand all she said.

Well, after that she used to talk to me every day on the beach, and we were very friendly. She said that I must come and see her in New York, because I was really the most refreshing person she had ever met. It sounded as though I were cake and lemonade, but I promised to come, and mama said she would go, too, though Mrs. Worthington had never quite invited her.

Mama was delighted because Mrs. Worthington was so nice to me. She said that it really paid, after all, to come to a first-class hotel, even though we had to skimp dreadfully all winter and live in a little flat in Harlem with the sewing-machine in the dining-room. Of course we always put the machine in the maid's room when we have company, and the room is so small that there is no place for it except on the bed; so the maid has to sit up until the company goes.

We seem to be always changing our maid. I don't know why, I'm sure, because mama is most reasonable and never insists upon her wearing a cap except when people are coming or she hangs the clothes upon the roof. In fact, my mama, as I used to hear her tell my father before he died, had all the instincts of a lady although she had to live on a beggarly bookkeeper's salary.

But I am getting away from Mrs. Worthington and Billy. His name is really William Ashburton Castle, and he is a very old friend of Mrs. Worthington's husband, and she has known him for years. I suppose they are really like brother and sister, even if she is so much older than he. Billy is thirty-two.

I was in the office that morning when

the mail came, and there was a letter for Mrs. Worthington, so I carried it over to her in the little summer-house and sat there while she read it. I never saw her look so lovely. Her whole face seemed to change, and her eyes grew so soft and gentle, almost as if they had tears in them. I couldn't help telling her how beautiful she looked, and she laughed and said it was because her letter had good news in it; that an old friend of hers, who had been away on his yacht for three months, was home again and would be at the beach that very evening.

"Is he an old gentleman, Mrs. Worthington?" I asked; and she laughed again and told me that Mr. Castle was a very wonderful young man who could outwalk and outplay any other man in the world, and that he had just come from South America, where he had been helping to dig up some buried city that he intended writing a book about, and was coming to stay the week-end with her because the next week he was going to Canada after moose. Gracious! It was like looking at someone with St. Vitus's dance just to hear of it.

"If I were going to stop on here instead of going to town Monday, I should make him stay," Mrs. Worthington said—not to me, but exactly as though she were thinking out loud.

Then she seemed to remember me and took hold of my hand. "You shall meet him, Muriel," she said. "I've written him that I found a little girl here who brought back my vanished youth and the mad desire for ice-cream soda and marshmallows, that died in my teens." And of course I thanked her and said I would love to meet him; but I didn't want to, really. I thought he would be one of those nervous, jumpy persons with spectacles who talk about things you have no interest in. Oh, if I had only known!

I never saw mama so excited as when I told her that Mr. Castle was coming to see Mrs. Worthington and she wished me to meet him. She looked exactly like a cat ready to spring. She asked

me if it was Mr. William Ashburton Castle, and when I said yes, she said he was one of the wealthiest young men in the world and belonged to seven clubs; that his grandfather had made all his money in a perfectly disgraceful deal for which he had come very near going to jail. My mother has a wonderful memory. She never forgets how large a person's income is or any terrible thing that happened in their families, no matter how many years ago it was.

Anyway, she made me change my gown and do my hair over twice, and she put the curling-irons in the lamp and curled her front-piece—it is a lovely one, even if it doesn't match her back hair very well—and we were late getting down to dinner.

Mr. Castle must have come on the early train, for Mrs. Worthington and he were coming out of the dining-room as we went in, and honestly I never had such a surprise in my life. Instead of the nervous little wizened man with spectacles I expected to see, there was the biggest, handsomest, really the most gorgeous man I had ever seen in my life. He looked exactly like the pictures in the back of magazines of the men who wear Somebody's ready-made suits, and I always thought they were too wonderful to be real.

Mrs. Worthington looked lovely, too. She had on a new gown, or at least one she hadn't worn at the hotel before. All the old ladies on the porch were talking about it when I came out from dinner. Mrs. Worthington and Mr. Castle were in the little summer-house, and Mrs. Worthington beckoned me to come out, and of course I went, though I hated to, for my heart was beating just as it does before the curtain goes up at a matinee, and I knew I was blushing terribly.

We talked for quite a long time. At least Mrs. Worthington asked me a great many questions, and I answered them, mostly about the things we had talked about on the beach, and she kept looking at Mr. Castle as though she expected him to laugh.

I don't know why, I'm sure, for he looked rather annoyed, I thought, and we were speaking of really serious things.

The musicians began to play in the casino just then; they did every Saturday night, though nearly all the people had left the hotel, and there was nobody to dance except some of the girls. We used to have great fun dancing together; the girls that played men would tie handkerchiefs around their arms.

Mrs. Worthington patted me on the head exactly the way Mrs. Gray pats Fifi, her white pug, and said: "There, dear, run away to your dancing like a good child." And I laughed and said that I might as well stay with them because there was nobody to dance with, anyway; and suddenly Mr. Castle stood up and said: "Won't you take me for a partner, Miss Muriel?" Of course I said I would be perfectly delighted, but Mrs. Worthington laughed.

"What, *you*, Billy?" she said, as though she were amused; and Mr. Castle lifted his eyebrows just a trifle and answered: "My dear Constance, why not? I'm not ninety yet, and I'm fairly sound in wind and limb."

Then Mrs. Worthington laughed once more, not as though she was very pleased, I thought. I suppose she wanted to talk to Mr. Castle about her husband.

Well, we had a perfectly lovely waltz, and after that a two-step, and after that another waltz, and I knew the girls were mad with envy, though they pretended not to look at me at all, and mama was so excited that she had pushed her front around until the parting went almost from ear to ear. She nearly died when I told her about it.

After the last waltz Mr. Castle thanked me as though I were a princess, and I'm sure he thought I was a silly little thing because I only blushed and couldn't think of a thing to say to him. Then he said good night and went back to the summer-house, and afterward I saw Mrs.

Worthington walk with him toward the beach.

Mrs. Worthington had told me that she meant to take the early train for New York the next day, and they had gone when we went down to breakfast. I could have cried, for I am awfully fond of Mrs. Worthington, and she had forgotten to leave her card for me, and mama was cross all day because her front had been on crooked the night before, and the hotel seemed horribly empty and dull.

I was sitting on the porch in the evening thinking how glad I would be to get back to New York again, when suddenly someone behind me said: "How do you do, Miss Muriel? Won't you say you are glad to see me?" And there was Mr. Castle.

I *never* was so surprised in my life, and the first thing I said was: "Why, I thought you were going to Canada!" So silly! but he answered very politely: "I'm going next week. This seems such a jolly little place here that I'm thinking of stopping for a day or so."

Of course he told me afterward that the reason he came was because he had fallen in love with me the night before, and he *had* to come back just to see if I were real or only an exquisite delusion in a pink dress. I adore hearing Billy talk.

Well, I would just love to go into details, but the next week so much happened that it all seems a beautiful blur. Mr. Castle never mentioned Canada. Mama was so excited that she lost pounds running about, and Billy and I were together all day long, and he would tell me the most wonderful things about myself. Of course I always knew I was pretty, but I never thought I was as lovely as he seemed to think.

Oh, the days went by like a dream, and at the end of the week Billy and mama had a long talk. Mama came out looking perfectly glorified, and Billy took me down on the beach and asked me to marry him, and I cried and he kissed me, and it was just lovely and romantic, and I was en-

gaged to Mr. William Ashburton Castle.

About everyone had left the hotel by the last of September, but Billy urged mama to stay on until it closed. He didn't have to urge very much. The weather was lovely, and Billy and I used to sit on the beach. Sometimes he would read to me. I don't think poetry is very interesting, as a rule, but you can think of a great many things and look interested at the same time, and I used to plan my trousseau while he read, but, naturally, we talked a great deal about ourselves, and Billy sometimes would tell me about the places he had been to and the things he had seen, but he would always end by telling me what wonderful eyes and hair I had, and so I didn't really mind, though I always hated books of travel and never can remember where places are on the map.

It was one afternoon on the beach when Billy told me about Mrs. Worthington. There was a sea breeze blowing, and Billy took off his coat to put it around me. I slipped my hands in the pockets and brought out a thick, gray letter. Of course I never meant to. It was directed to Billy in Mrs. Worthington's handwriting and forwarded from some place in Canada.

"Why—why didn't you tell Mrs. Worthington that you were *here*?" I said. "Doesn't she know you didn't go to Canada? Won't you read me her letter?"

I never saw Billy look so annoyed. He tore the letter up in long strips and let them blow down the beach, and explained to me that it was a business letter that wouldn't interest me in the least. He said that he had forgotten to write to Mrs. Worthington that he had given up his trip to Canada. And then he told me what good friends he and Mrs. Worthington's husband had been; that Mrs. Worthington was a lovely woman whom he had always been sorry for, and that they had been good friends for years.

He told me so seriously that you would really think it something very

important, and when I said how perfectly delighted Mrs. Worthington would be to know that he was going to marry a girl to whom she had introduced him herself, he didn't answer for a moment.

He picked up a handful of sand and let it run between his fingers, and presently he laughed—not as though he were laughing at anything funny, but the way mama used to laugh when she told father that she could not possibly live on his income another year.

It was while he was telling me how sad Mrs. Worthington's life was—it seems that she is perfectly devoted to her husband's memory, for he might as well be dead as where he is—and how Mrs. Worthington had always taken such an interest in him (Billy) for her husband's sake, that I made up my mind to bring a little happiness into her life anyway. I may be a silly little thing, but everyone says I have good impulses. I made up my mind then and there that the moment I got to New York I would go to Mrs. Worthington and tell her of my engagement myself and how happy Billy and I were, and all the plans we had made and the lovely dresses I was to have.

We were to go to New York in a day or two, and Billy was going to see his people—he has a mother and two sisters in Boston—and tell them about me, and he made mama promise that we could be married before Christmas. I think he was rather surprised when she agreed with him immediately, but he was perfectly delighted and so was I. I could just imagine what the girls' faces would look like when I told them.

Billy came up to New York with us and put us in a hansom at the station—I hadn't fully realized before all that marrying him would mean, for we *always* take the Elevated—and told us that he would take the afternoon train to Boston and would certainly be back in three days at the most. He looked so miserable at the thought of leaving me that I would have cried, I think, if it hadn't been for the joy of driving home.

Mama was awfully glad he was going.

She said she would have died with shame if he had seen that machine in the dining-room and now, thank heaven, she would have a chance to sell it to the janitor's wife or give it away.

The girls all came in that afternoon and we made fudge and had a lovely time, and they kissed me and congratulated me and said how they loved me; but I know they were perfectly green with jealousy, and I showed them Billy's picture—the one in his riding things—and they all said he looked exactly like an actor. Altogether it was the loveliest afternoon that I ever spent in my life.

I didn't tell mama the next morning that I was going to call on Mrs. Worthington. I knew she would insist upon going, too, and that would spoil my chance of a cozy chat, and besides there are some things so sacred that your mother would be the last person in the world to tell them to.

Mrs. Worthington's home is beautiful—one of those New York houses that make you think of a thin, blond woman with an aquiline nose. Josephine, Mrs. Worthington's own maid, let me in. She had been at the shore with Mrs. Worthington, and she might have known I would call upon her, but she seemed very much surprised to see me. She showed me into the most beautiful drawing-room though, and said that she would see if Mrs. Worthington was in. I thought she might have been sure at that time in the morning.

While I was sitting there two ladies came down the stairs together. I was looking at a picture near the door and couldn't see them plainly, but I heard one say to the other in the sort of voice you use when you don't move your lips: "She takes it well, doesn't she?" And the other said: "Oh, it's only a rumor, anyway. Freddie got it from a man who knows a man who had heard a man say it at the club." And they laughed and went out.

I was wondering if anything had happened to Mr. Worthington, but just then Josephine came back and said that Mrs. Worthington wanted me to

come to her room, and took me upstairs and tapped on the door and went away.

Mrs. Worthington opened the door herself.

I had meant—at least I had been making up my mind all the way to the house—to put my arms about her neck and kiss her. It seemed, somehow, that I had a right to now, but instead I was so surprised that I just blurted out: "Why, Mrs. Worthington, how ill you look!" before I thought, for she did look dreadful, with big circles under her eyes, and so tired, awfully tired, the way father used to look sometimes when all the bills came in at once.

She had on a wonderful gown, though—all loose and lacy and trail. I made up my mind to have one just like it in my trousseau.

We went into a beautiful room, not her bedroom at all; a sitting-room, I should say, with shelves of books everywhere and white rugs and big, lazy chairs and great jars of roses, and a lovely open fire, and pink silk curtains at the windows.

"Sit here, Muriel," she said, but she didn't sit down herself; she just stood and looked at me until I felt like fidgeting; and then, before I could speak, she smiled and put her hand on my shoulder. It felt cold even through my dress. "And so," she said, "you have come to tell me you are going to marry Billy?"

I was so surprised and disappointed that I almost jumped.

"Why, Mrs. Worthington," I exclaimed, "how in the world did you know? I wanted to tell you myself."

"He wrote me so last night," she said. "I hardly think he imagined we would meet so soon again. Billy is extremely thoughtful."

"Of course," I said, "Billy told me that you were like a sister to him, but I did want to tell you myself." And then I explained to her how I should always thank her for bringing us together and how rapturously happy I was, and all about the day Billy proposed to me, and what he said and what I was going to be married in. Oh, I never enjoyed a talk more!

Mrs. Worthington got up several times and pulled the curtain together and fixed the flowers differently, and once I saw her put her hand to her throat as though something hurt her there, but the smile never left her face a moment. I knew naturally that she was as glad to listen as I was to talk, and I didn't expect her to enthuse the way the girls did—she is not that sort. Well, I talked myself breathless, and when there was absolutely nothing more to say and I began to think that mama might be wondering where I was, Mrs. Worthington drew her chair up to mine and took both my hands in hers and looked at me again as though she had never seen me before.

"Billy's wife!" she said, in that strange way she has of talking as though she were speaking to herself. "You are going to be Billy's wife, and I have been wondering why and have only found out this morning. It is because you are so absolutely and utterly unfitted for each other; because you haven't one thought, one idea or one impulse in common. No, don't be angry, Muriel. I really mean that you are the youngest and the most beautiful girl I ever saw, and that you are blissfully ignorant of the world and its ways and the big and wonderful and terrible things of life. You take love as though it might be a tinsel toy from a Christmas tree. You don't know its value, and so you won't worry about losing it by day or guarding it by night, and consequently you don't lose it. It is only the careful people who lose things."

"Why, Mrs. Worthington!" I said, "I don't understand! What do you mean?"

Mrs. Worthington dropped my hands and laughed. "Of course you don't," she said, "but I am trying to make you see what a fortunate creature you are. Some women, when they love a man, make a life study of the art of pleasing him—poor fools!—his pursuits, his occupations, making their minds kin to his, thinking his very thoughts, reaching both hands

to help him with any burden he may carry, and saying complacently to themselves that they are loved because of it. We simply work ourselves to death for the last favors a man thinks of asking. There are only three things a man asks of a woman, Muriel: that she be always beautiful and perpetually young and never love him as he loves her. When she has mastered these simple problems she need ask nothing of heaven, because there will be nothing left worth the asking. You see I mean that at present you are getting for nothing what wiser women must work their hearts and souls thin for. To be able to give nothing and get everything isn't fair—it's ecstatic."

"Well," I said, "Billy does think I am pretty. He is always telling me so, anyway, and so there is no reason why we shouldn't be perfectly happy."

You see, I wanted Mrs. Worthington to know that I understood her perfectly, though she had rather puzzled me when she said that Billy and I were unsuited to each other. Such nonsense, when he has such quantities of money and Mrs. Worthington had just said herself that a pretty wife was all any man wanted. I began to think that perhaps she and Mr. Worthington hadn't been quite so happy together as Billy thought.

Just then a clock somewhere struck twelve, and I knew mama would be furious because the dressmaker was to come that very day and she would charge just as much for sitting and waiting as sewing. Mrs. Worthington didn't ask me to stay for luncheon—I had rather expected she would—but she did a lovely thing instead. She went to a box on her table and drew out the duckiest little string of pearls—they go around my neck twice and clasp with the dearest pearl heart.

"Will you take these for a wedding present, Muriel?" she said. "You see, you are going to be married so quietly" (I wonder how she knew that!) "that I may not be there, and besides I am thinking of going away for a while. I—" She hesitated a moment, and then

went on as though she were speaking to herself again, "I am going to see my husband. You may tell Billy that, if you like. It may amuse him."

Of course I *am* a silly little thing, and I spoke right out before I thought. I couldn't help it. She looked so hungry, famished, somehow, as she spoke, that I said: "Oh, Mrs. Worthington, how you must have loved him!" Do you know, I thought for a moment she was going to strike me. She whirled about quickly. Her eyes were blazing and her mouth was trembling and her face is always so quiet, so reposeful. It was exactly as though she had taken off a mask.

"What do you mean?" she said. "Loved whom?"

"Why, your husband, of course, Mrs. Worthington," I said. "Whom should I mean?"

She looked at me a moment as though she didn't believe me, and then her face changed, and after a moment she laughed. I have heard people laugh that way on the stage.

"Of course, my dear," she said. "I didn't quite understand you. I didn't mean to frighten you. I'm a bit nervous this morning, and the aged are sometimes hard of hearing." And she laughed again and so did I—not that I knew what in the world she meant, but to be polite. I told her again how awfully sorry I was she couldn't be at the wedding, for really it would have read awfully well in the papers.

"Do you know, Mrs. Worthington," I said, "you haven't given me a bit of advice. I thought perhaps you would. You know everything, I think, and I would like to tell Billy what you say—I really would."

"I have given you the best advice in the world, Muriel," she said, "absolutely the best. Keep young and beautiful and never love too much."

I hadn't meant anything out of a book like that. I thought she would tell me about the gowns and hats I would need traveling and things of that kind, but she always was strange; and so I thanked her and held out my hand

to say good-bye. Instead, she took both my hands and looked down in my face—she is much taller than I am—for a full moment before she spoke, and, tired and ill as she was, I think I never saw her eyes so wonderful.

"Tell Billy," she said, "that I won't bother him by answering his letter, and tell him that I said to you that I pray and hope for his happiness, as I have always done, and that I shall always pray and hope for it." And then, before I could answer, she kissed me very lightly on the forehead. "Good-bye," she said, and she smiled at me again as she had when I came in. "I don't have to wish you happiness, Muriel, because I know that you never can know what it means to be unhappy.

Good-bye, and remember to keep young and beautiful always. Those are the only important things in life."

I looked back once as I went down the stairs, but Mrs. Worthington had closed the door. When I thought it over on the way home, it seemed to me that, after all, Mrs. Worthington might have been a little nicer to me. I really had expected her to ask me to stay with her for a day or so before I was married and have Billy for dinner and luncheon, but I suppose that women in society like Mrs. Worthington lead selfish lives and think only of themselves and not what pleasure they can give other people. And anyway, the pearls are perfectly beautiful. I am wild to show them to Billy.



PROVING THE NEGATIVE

TO indicate the full extent of passion
All sorts of signs and metaphors we use—
Analogies flock to us, in such fashion,
'Tis but a question where and which to choose
To voice Love's spell, with eloquent persistence,
But ah! to fitly tell its non-existence!

I do not love you. I've no wish, no yearning
To call you mine . . . I know too well your lacks!
The very thought of you my soul is spurning—
To me, in fact, if you were made of wax,
Or wood, or rubber, tin, or chalk, or batter,
Less than you matter now you could not matter!

Mark how inadequate, how words here fail us!
Methinks great nothingness, and nothing less
Could, in this unexampled strait, alone, avail us—
The wide and all-embracing emptiness
Of that vast measureless world, as yet unchristen'd,
The everywhere Love is not when it isn't!

MADeline BRIDGES.



A VOID personalities, except when talking to a pretty woman. In that case avoid everything else.

A MAN AND TWO WOMEN

By Johnson White

DR. JAMIESON walked through the café of the club, and was discouraged. He ascended the stairs to the reading-room, and was disgusted. As a last resort he looked into the drawing-room, and was in despair. Of the few scattered members about he knew only six, and them he loathed—some for their virtues, others for their vices.

As he stood in the hall, scowling at Auston, the millionaire, who was laughing at a story and shaking his fat sides in calf's-foot jelly fashion, Dr. Jamieson had an inspiration. He motioned to the porter for his hat and coat.

"I'll go across to Delmonico's," he muttered. "At least there'll be some pretty women to cheer my loneliness. I rather think I'll see somebody prettier than old 'Putty' Auston to look at. Gad! the club is getting as empty week-ends as London itself."

"Hello, Doc," Auston called, as the porter held up Jamieson's overcoat; "come here a minute till I tell you the best—"

"Sorry—late for an engagement," the other lied glibly, and hurried out of the club.

It is in such simple fashion that Fate introduces one to epochs in his destiny.

In the supper-room at Delmonico's Jamieson found the usual crowd.

As he seated himself at a corner table he scowled again, for he saw no promise of genial companionship. Two or three persons nodded to him from nearby tables, but with none of them was he sufficiently intimate to do more than exchange formal saluta-

tions. It seemed to him that he was destined to an evening of boredom.

"Confound it," he thought, "I'd better go home and study formalin. These be dinky days—these Sundays in New York. Yes, I'll toddle homeward, and improve my brain if not my spirits."

Jamieson had ordered a glass of Scotch. Now the waiter brought the bottle and glasses. Jamieson poured out a small measure and emptied it over the ice in the big glass. Then he frowned over the room again, while the waiter poured the aerated water.

A moment later he raised the glass to his lips. As he drank he stared unseeing over the tumbler's rim. Suddenly, he set down the glass. His gaze had fallen on a woman two tables away, facing him. On her his glance remained—became a stare. Luckily she was not regarding him, so he was able to look again without offense. A soft warmth crept through him, his heart-beat quickened. From his mood of dissatisfaction with himself and all things his emotion passed to quiet delight—a delight drawn wholly from the beauty of that woman.

Indeed, Jamieson was justified, for the woman was of superb loveliness. She was evidently tall, and her figure was perfect, that of a Juno, made more lithe and enticing by her modiste, for the gown clung lovingly to the gracious curves and emphasized their charm. But it was the face toward which Jamieson held fixed eyes. It was like a flower, but a flower blossomed to the greatest splendor. In the cheeks was a rich glow of red blood that showed again from the

pouting carmine lips, while all the rest was a living cream color, save where the jewel eyes shone beneath dark lashes. Above the low brow rose a coronet of dusky coils that gave the imperial air the woman's beauty deserved. And when she smiled an adorable dimple winked in the satin of her cheeks and a gleam of pearl shone from between the ripe lips.

Jamieson studied her with keen joy—she was so complete, so vital, so beautiful in all ways. It seemed to him that magnetic currents flowed from her directly to him, currents that wrapped him in a rose mantle of pleasure.

He interrupted his enthusiasm enough to examine the other members of the party, who were only two, a man and a girl. The girl, too, was beautiful, but in a budding coolness of beauty that pleased without disturbing. She seemed rather serious, yet her face was sweet. It was perhaps the regularity of their outlines that gave the features a certain gravity in repose. But the delicate lips were fresh and curved, the teeth pearl, and the blue eyes mirrored many moods. She was perhaps not so tall as her companion, yet her slenderer form was full of grace and held in its lines a promise of rich maturity.

But Jamieson did not linger in his contemplation of the girl. Just now the only woman to compel his attention was the ravishing vision on whom again he turned his eyes. Then, as she looked in his direction, he shifted his glance hastily to the man in the party. Here he received a distinct shock—the man was drunk.

There was no mistake possible. The man was drunk, even very drunk.

Jamieson looked from him back to the woman, and now noticed what had escaped his attention hitherto—that there was a slightly strained look about the brilliant eyes and smiling mouth, as if a secret worry were masked by her art of expression. In the girl the same forced disguise of a secret feeling was conspicuous, now that he searched for it. Jamieson felt a momentary

thrill of self-criticism that he, a physician, had allowed these evidences to pass unnoticed on his first survey of the two women. Yes, they were alarmed, although they strove pitifully to conceal the fact, and their apprehension was justified.

For the man was constantly showing increased signs of his intoxication. As Jamieson stared at him he raised his champagne glass to his lips. The woman placed her hand appealingly on his arm, the girl whispered a word, but the man only scowled by way of response, and tossed down the wine at one gulp. A moment afterward he rose unsteadily from his chair and started toward the vestibule. His jostling movement upset the glass he had left on a corner of the table, and it fell to the floor with a tinkling crash. Many who sat near turned at the sound and looked to see the cause. The two women flushed under the many inquiring eyes, and the man himself seemed for a moment to realize his position, and evidently strove to assume a sobriety he did not possess as he walked toward the door.

However, he managed well enough so that his passage only provoked a few smiles, quite without excitement.

At this moment Williams, the headwaiter, paused by Jamieson's table for a greeting, and remained speaking of various patrons who were out of the city.

Suddenly, a waiter approached Williams and whispered to him. Then the two went out hurriedly into the vestibule.

As Jamieson turned his gaze again in the direction of the table where his interest had centered he was addressed by another waiter, who said, in a low voice:

"If you please, sir, Dr. Jamieson, you are wanted, sir."

Jamieson went out quickly, and in the vestibule found a small group of patrons and servants clustered around the prostrate body of a man on the floor. A single glance served to identify him as the drunken escort of the two ladies.

Jamieson knelt by the man, and found that he was suffering from collapse. It took only a second to see that it would be impossible to restore him to consciousness for some time.

Jamieson gave his orders crisply to the porter.

"Get a four-wheeler and lift him in. Have a waiter go with us—I shall see the man to his own place. By the time you are ready to start I'll have the address. Hurry!"

Jamieson turned away and went back into the restaurant. There he went directly to the table where sat the two ladies. He addressed the elder:

"Madam—there is no occasion for alarm, but the gentleman who was with you is somewhat ill. It is not serious, but he should be taken home at once. I have had him put in a carriage, and shall go with him and see him comfortably resting before I leave him. If you will give me the address, please—I am a physician."

There was a little exclamation from the woman, a swift glance exchanged with the girl. Then she answered quietly:

"We are very grateful to you. The address is No. 14½ East Sixty-third street. I cannot thank you—now."

She flashed on him one look from the wonderful eyes, and Jamieson thrilled with delight. He rejoiced that anything, even a catastrophe, had brought him the opportunity of speaking to her.

"And you must let me see you safely on your way," he added.

"Yes, I should be at home before my husband reaches there, to receive him," she replied.

Her husband! The words cut Jamieson to the soul. It was a profanation that the drunken wretch should be the husband of this glorious creature. But this was no time for regrets. He choked down his feeling and made sure that the sick man had been removed to the carriage, which only waited for the doctor himself before proceeding. At once he returned to the ladies and escorted them to a hansom.

"I shall arrive only a minute behind you," he said, and gave their address to the driver.

Again in the vestibule, Williams spoke to him.

"It's Mr. Hunt. He's getting worse and worse on the drinking, sir. I've seen him drunk before—often; but never with his wife along. It shows he's getting worse, sir."

Jamieson agreed, with a swift shudder of disgust, and hurried to the carriage in which Hunt lay stretched out, supported by a waiter.

At the door of No. 14½ East Sixty-third street he was met by a quiet valet, who evidently knew the necessities of the case.

"It's no use troubling you, Dr.—" He paused inquiringly.

"Dr. Jamieson."

"Well, sir, it's not necessary to bother you, Dr. Jamieson. You see, sir, I'm used to these spells of Mr. Hunt's—he has them often." And the emphasis on the "often" was fraught with significance.

Jamieson believed from the manner of the man that he did indeed understand his business, and as another manservant now descended the steps to aid in carrying the master of the house within, he resigned his charge and drove away.

"I suppose I shall never see her again," he thought, and a great loneliness fell on him and lay like a pall.

For a week Dr. Jamieson carried about with him a tantalizing memory of beauty. But it was only a memory. He made some cautious inquiries concerning the Hunts—quite without success. Evidently they went out but little; no one seemed to know them. Whatever their social life, it was in a set distinct from his own. He could hit on no means of meeting again the woman who had so fascinated him.

It is only fair to Jamieson to state that he realized the danger of this sudden interest in a woman who was the wife of another. The effect of his single interview with her—a few long looks, a half-dozen words—was so

powerful that he understood fully the peril of closer association. Over and over he vowed he would make no effort to meet her again, since she could never lawfully be anything to him. But, while he vowed, his heart was burning toward her, and at every opportunity he strove to find someone who could take him to her. And this struggle between right as taught by reason and necessity as taught by his emotions was constant and severe, so that it wore on Jamieson's nerves, and for the first time in his life he found himself waking up in the night, to lie with staring eyes for hours, restless, unhappy. For Jamieson, fashionable physician and clubman as he was, was yet a very wholesome man with certain clean instincts, which as yet he had never outraged, despite the manifold temptations of his life. So now, to his other perplexities was added the rack of misery that came from the assaults of his passions on his self-respect. He felt that he should put this woman absolutely out of his thoughts and out of his heart. And since he could not eject her from the latter, she remained dominant in the former. He began to despise himself for the weakness his sudden infatuation had engendered. And his self-contempt was increased by the feebleness of his will, which ordered him to make no effort to meet the woman again, and yet could not restrain him from making inquiries about her of any chance acquaintance.

It was while Jamieson was in this mood of desire and disgust that opportunity came to him.

He was just preparing to leave his apartments one afternoon when his servant brought a card which bore the name: Mr. Arthur Sillerly Hunt.

A wave of color flowed over the smooth-shaven, alert face of Jamieson as he read. An odd sense of guilt stirred in him at the idea of meeting this husband, whom in his thoughts he wronged by cherishing a forbidden fondness for the wife. He had no doubt that this was the husband; he felt that he could not be mistaken.

But he threw off the uncomfortable oppression and bade the servant show the gentleman in. In a moment, memory summoned a picture of the drunkard as he had seen him at Delmonico's, and a quick disgust succeeded the sense of guilt.

Then the man entered, and Jamieson went forward to greet him.

Mr. Hunt paused in some constraint, and spoke with much hesitation.

"I cannot remember you, Dr. Jamieson, but I am sure that my information is correct. You did me a great service a short time ago; I wish to thank you, sir. I should have done so sooner, but I have been—ill."

The visitor spoke with heavy formality, but Jamieson realized that this was due probably to embarrassment. Somehow, as he listened, the doctor's contempt for the man faded, and he felt a little thrill of admiration for one who could come to perform a task of gratitude that must be humiliating in the extreme. Also, he wondered quickly as to whether this call from Hunt might have been prompted by the woman. Surely she had more cause for gratitude than had her husband, since someone must have cared for him in any event, while in her case only the physician's thoughtfulness had saved her from a most distressing situation.

But now Jamieson spoke quietly, in answer to his guest:

"I was glad to be of service to you. It was hardly of enough importance to deserve thanks. Do not mention it again, I beg of you."

"In spite of what you say," Hunt returned, "I know that you must appreciate my feeling in the matter. As you do, I do not need to repeat the fact of my gratitude, and I shall not. But I had something else I wished to say." He paused doubtfully.

"Please sit down," said Jamieson, with a gesture toward an easy-chair. "I am quite at your service."

"But you were going out?" Hunt suggested, for Jamieson still held in his hands the walking-gloves he had picked up before his visitor was announced.

"Only to the club; a little earlier or a little later makes not the slightest difference. I have no engagement before dinner."

Hunt seated himself, and Jamieson took a chair facing him. There was a silence between the two men, while Hunt seemed plunged in moody thought, meditating his words. When at last he spoke it was with a vehemence very much unlike his previous hesitating manner.

"I am a drunkard, a habitual drunkard, growing worse day after day. It's been growing on me for years, and now I am wholly, absolutely, hopelessly in the clutches of the vice. I'm only half-alive unless I've drunk quantities of raw spirits, and once I begin drinking I can't stop until I am stupefied. I am a drunken sot—my will power has gone. I've lost my friends, everything. I don't know where to turn. I can't help myself—the curse is stronger than I am. Can you help me? Can anyone, or anything, help me? If there's anything that can help me to conquer this degradation, for God's sake, tell me—anything, anything!"

Jamieson was distressed and perplexed. The despair of Hunt's confession took him by surprise and aroused his compassion. He knew, as a medical man, the resistless power of alcoholic disease, and he realized that here was a victim of dipsomania he could not doubt. The fact that the sufferer fully understood his case was both favorable and unfavorable for the hope of a cure. It was well that he should understand the seriousness of his state; it was not well that he should be thus hopeless of his own ability to control an abnormal craving.

When Hunt paused Jamieson did not answer for a time. Then he spoke with some uncertainty.

"Of course I can't make light of a statement like yours. I do believe that something can be done for you. But it depends chiefly on you. I don't know that I think much of drugs to help a case like yours. But some other stimulants in place of alcohol for a time, and a rigid following of certain

rules I should give you, ought to work a cure. And, above all, don't let yourself think that you *must* drink. Wait and see. I'll do all I can to help you."

"Thank you," Hunt said, and there was something almost like hope in his voice. "I'll try my best to do just as you say. I don't want to destroy myself."

The two men began a discussion which lasted for nearly half an hour. In it Jamieson forgot that this patient was the husband of the woman who had so stirred his heart; he became wholly the physician. It was only a chance remark of Hunt's at the last that recalled her.

"I might have made a better fight of it if I'd had a different wife. She's never helped me; her influence has been bad for me."

It was the confidential utterance of a patient to his physician, but it filled Jamieson with anger, so that he had hard work to keep back the rebuke that rose to his lips.

But Hunt did not pause for any comment on his words. He continued, quite unconscious that he had disturbed his listener in any way.

"We should be very glad if you would dine with us any evening next week, just quietly—no others; only my wife and niece. Mrs. Hunt will send you a note if you have a free evening."

Jamieson forgot his gust of anger in his delight at an opportunity of again seeing Mrs. Hunt. He consulted his engagement-book.

"Would next Thursday suit you?" he asked, and tried hard to keep the eagerness out of his voice.

"Perfectly," Hunt answered. "You will have a line from Mrs. Hunt in the morning. And I shall see you before then, as arranged."

A moment more and the visitor had departed. Jamieson was left alone with a heart full of guilty happiness; he would see her again!

At the dinner Jamieson found himself in heaven, for he was screened from Miss Harman, the niece, who sat

opposite him, by the centrepiece of flowers, and thus free to turn many eager glances toward his hostess, who sat at his left. Mr. Hunt, too, chatted much with his niece, of whom he seemed very fond, so that Jamieson was able to devote himself almost exclusively to the woman he so greatly admired.

Now that he was again in her presence, the beauty and grace of the woman dominated him. He found that the memory of her which he had carried since he first saw her at Delmonico's had been only a tawdry caricature of her wonderful loveliness. He gazed at her with a delight he could not wholly conceal, though he disguised it so that none but a close observer would have known it to be anything beyond respectful admiration. But Jamieson knew, and the knowledge was joy and sorrow mingled—joy for the sake of her beauty and grace; sorrow over the fact that the splendid woman was held apart from him by conventional barriers. And now that he was able to speak with her at his ease he found her mind as delightful as her physical charms. Whether he chatted with her the usual small talk of a dinner table or now and then ventured to a deeper utterance, something more personal and more significant, in each and every case she listened with intelligent interest and answered with quick sympathy. Jamieson thought that never before had he heard a woman laugh with such rippling music in her tones; never had he seen such glorious eyes that shone with her smiles or grew tenderly lustrous in her more serious moods. In short, he found in her a realization of the feminine that was far beyond any ideal he had ever been able to create for himself.

Doubtless Mrs. Hunt perceived the love he strove to hide, for she looked on him very kindly, and responded to his varying phases of feeling with a delicacy and completeness that enraptured him. In his subjection to his hostess's fascination he forgot everything but her and his feeling toward

her, so that it came on him as a shock when the two ladies left the table and he found himself alone with Hunt.

Hunt, who had drunk heavily of the wine at dinner, now began a hurried conversation with his guest.

"You must talk with my niece when we go into the drawing-room. She is a wonderful girl. She is good without being namby-pamby, and beautiful as she is good. Did you notice her profile?"

"Why, no," Jamieson answered, with some confusion, "I didn't observe it particularly. But, of course, she's—ah—very beautiful."

"She is indeed," Hunt rejoined warmly. "And she helps a man. There's an atmosphere about her that makes one, while he's with her, want to be better, you know. That sounds like rot, but it isn't, by Jove! I never got drunk when she was present but once in my life, and that was the other night. And then, you see, I was too far gone when I came home to take them out to be able to stop. And I think her being there when I'd lost my self-control just helped to make me all the more reckless, understand?"

"Why, yes, I think so," Jamieson said. "But see here, don't drink any brandy tonight, Hunt; you feel all right now, don't you?"

"Yes, capital."

"Well, leave it at that—nothing more. If you get restless by and bye go to bed. I've brought you a powder to make you sleep," and the physician extended a folded paper.

"I agree," said Hunt. "Do you know, doctor, I think you are helping me. I feel stronger—physically and morally."

"Oh, you'll pull up in a short time," Jamieson said cheerfully. "Just use a little horse-sense—use it before you've drunk too much, that's all."

"Right!" Hunt agreed. "And now let's go to the ladies. I want you to have a chat with my niece."

"I shall be delighted," the guest answered. But in his heart he raged against this delay that kept him from his hostess's side.

But when he came to talk with the girl he forgot his indignation. She was, in truth, altogether charming. And, too, he fell under the spell of that mysterious emanation of which Hunt had spoken. She was in no way obtrusively good. That was the last way of describing her. But there was about her an atmosphere of wholesomeness, of quiet but insistent purity that was magical in its effect. She talked easily and well of the ordinary topics—the theatres, balls, books, the Subway—but in the gentle notes was a singular sweetness that was like a spiritual music, and her eyes were clear and steadfast when she looked at Jamieson, so that he felt himself ashamed, without knowing why, until he remembered Mrs. Hunt. Then he was filled with self-loathing, and knew why.

Still, the girl's influence was of only a moment's duration. When he was able again to sit beside the older woman the glamour fell on him instantly, and remained.

"Will you be able to help him?" She spoke softly, and glanced in the direction of her husband, who sat some distance away.

"Yes, I think so," Jamieson said cautiously. "But, after all, you know, the issue depends entirely on himself."

"Ah, yes; I know," Mrs. Hunt murmured very low. "I know, and that is why I fear." And a little later she became more confidential. "Oh, I beg of you, Dr. Jamieson, do all—everything in your power to reclaim him. You cannot know what it means to me."

"I can imagine your suffering," he answered. Then, in an impulse of tenderness that he could not restrain, he added: "I would do anything—everything—to help you."

He paused, aghast at his unmediated daring, afraid that he had offended her past forgiveness, for he knew that he had not hidden the desire of his thoughts; he knew that his voice had thrilled with passion. He dropped his eyes and waited, fearfully, for the sentence and haughty rebuke.

There was a long moment of silence. Then there came, breathed so softly that they but just reached his ear, two words, gentle, sweet: "Thank you."

Dr. Jamieson looked up in quick wonder and delight. Joy filled his heart as he realized that he had not angered her, that indeed he had given her pleasure. Surely there was a little smile at the corners of the pouting, scarlet lips; surely there was a beaming light of gratitude in the wonderful eyes.

For a moment his gaze met hers and lingered. A slight blush added to the loveliness of her cheek, and she sighed.

And Jamieson echoed her sigh as her eyes at last fell, but his was a sigh of bliss.

This was all very well—for the moment. But later, that same night, when he was alone in his apartment, Jamieson's mood changed.

From a dream of rapture that had endured for an hour, an interval of feeling that was without analysis, just delight, he now awoke to the reality, and the waking was not pleasant.

For, as has been said, Jamieson was not a vicious man. It was a new experience for him, this infatuation for a married woman. And while many of his companions looked on such sport as the most gentlemanly of pastimes, Jamieson was honest enough to admit the criminality of an action that must corrupt the woman and might involve an innocent husband and children in the worst shame. Unfortunately, in this instance, his love of the woman was stronger than his principles, and it was this fact that filled him with distress. The very strangeness of the affair worried him. He could not understand why his subjection had been so instantaneous and so complete. He was an able reasoner, a close observer, but in his study of himself now he failed to understand that the charm put on him must of necessity be superficial as yet, whatever it might develop into. His senses had been so enthralled that his spirit, too, was subject to the spell, for his imagination at-

tributed to the sorceress every virtue of mind and soul as the fountain-heads of that mysterious magnetism that drew him to her. But in his self-communings he saw clearly that all her loveliness, her worth—which he never questioned—did not excuse his seeking her. Though he loved, he had no right to bask in the sunlight of her tenderness. The words he had spoken that night had been almost a confession of love, and he had no right even to hint to her of his passion. Jamieson cursed himself, blessed the woman, and vowed that for the future he would control himself when necessity took him into her presence, that he would avoid that dangerous presence whenever he might without offense. As he fell asleep he had a confused picture of Hunt, who trusted him, of the wife whom he loved, and, last of all, the girl, who looked with clear, steadfast eyes into his very soul; and in her look were reproach and pity.

The next morning Jamieson's first thought was of Mrs. Hunt; his second was that he must not see her again. But while he was at breakfast he was called to the telephone, and behold, she was asking him to go to the Horse Show with them that evening. With delight he accepted. It was only after he had hung up the receiver that he remembered his resolution. Alone as he was, he blushed for shame at his weakness. Nevertheless, it did not occur to him to make any effort to break the engagement.

And then a reaction came to his strivings after virtue. Well, if he was to be with her, at least let him enjoy the opportunity for happiness—dismiss care and scruples, and delight in the short moments of her society. Instantly regrets were swept away, and he was warm with eager anticipations of the evening.

They were more than realized. When Hunt suggested to his wife a stroll around the oval she refused, on the plea of fatigue, and sent the girl in her place. Jamieson remained to keep her company. When they were alone he spoke to her in a low voice.

"Tell me you have forgiven me for my boldness last night."

"Your boldness? I did not think you bold—at least, not too bold."

Her eyes flashed into his, and his pulses leaped at the caressing softness of her tones, the glance, the significance of her answer. He was throbbing with desire to take her in his arms. The red curve of her lips maddened him, the white column of her throat, the little tendrils of hair that clung about her forehead, filled him with a yearning that was physical anguish. He could not conceal his emotion.

"You forgive me—oh, if you could only forgive all I would say. I—I—you must not think me foolish—I never talked to another woman like this." Here, for a wonder, he spoke truth. "But no other woman ever stirred me so deeply. You are so wonderful! You are—oh, all that is worth while—roses and moonlight and dreams of romance. You are the one thing in the universe that really amounts to anything. You sum it all up in you—you are—love. Forgive me, I know I should not say such things to you, but I can't help it. Really I can't! Good heavens, I thought I could manage myself, but you have bowled me over—I don't mean any insult to you. I love you too much not to respect you. No doubt you think I've gone daft, for remember, I've only seen you twice before; yet it seems as if I'd known you, longed for you always. Say that you are not angry with me. It's just that my love is stronger than I am."

"I am not angry."

Jamieson's hand moved swiftly and clasped hers beneath the shelter of her cloak. The glow of the contact was like a draught of wine. His fingers closed fondly on hers, and hers returned the pressure very delicately. But the slight response filled the man with a tingling happiness beyond anything he had ever felt before. For a little time they remained silent. It was she who spoke first.

"You must forgive me—for I have been bold." He would have interrupted, but she checked him. "Yes,

I have been bold, and that is a fault in a woman, though it is a virtue in a man. But my excuse is—I—I believe in—love at first sight."

"And I," Jamieson murmured, "I, too, believe in it—for I know by experience—now."

She looked at him from beneath drooping lids.

"Do you forgive me?"

"Forgive you! The question is blasphemy. Why, I love you!"

Their eyes met and lingered as in a caress of their two souls.

Jamieson shuddered.

"To think that I must ever leave you—even for a moment!" he said despairingly.

"To think of what life might be—and of what it is," Mrs. Hunt retorted bitterly.

Jamieson made no reply. The words called up the thought of stern facts. He remembered that he had a patient, one Hunt, who was the husband of the woman beside him, and the thought was agony.

Always afterward the rest of that evening was like a dream to Jamieson.

When Hunt returned he insisted that the doctor should go with him to look at some of the horses, but instead of fulfilling this purpose he went into the café and, sitting down at one of the tables, ordered brandy and soda. Jamieson remonstrated in vain. He had already drunk just enough to be regardless of advice. And, too, he was in an ugly mood, which he explained.

"It's my wife's fault," he declared savagely. "You won't believe it, of course. She looks like an angel, doesn't she?" with a sneer. "But she's a long way from it, and I know! And yet she treats me like a dog. You saw her tonight. I asked her to walk with me. She was too tired! And I know she's not—she is never tired, except when I want her company. Yes, I could quit drinking if she'd help me—give me something to live for. But she won't—not she!"

The querulous tones racked Jamieson. At first he was angry, then a bit

of pity stirred in him. The husband was doubtless in love with his wife; but she certainly could not be in love with him, so he must suffer, and Jamieson was sorry for him on that account.

Hunt was finally induced to return to the box, and there somewhat to Jamieson's embarrassment Mrs. Hunt suggested a stroll to him.

"You are not tired now?" her husband questioned, with poorly concealed sarcasm.

"No, I am quite rested after sitting so long," Mrs. Hunt replied. And Jamieson was filled with contrition that he had allowed the husband's words to make him unjust for one instant to this adorable woman.

But at this hour the crowd around the arena was at its thickest, and just at the entrance they were caught for five minutes by the swaying mass, and thrust hither and thither helplessly.

"Oh, get me out, please, please!" Mrs. Hunt gasped, and Jamieson saw that the struggle was fatiguing her. The nearest road to escape was into the vestibule, and toward it he forced a way for them, though slowly and painfully. At last, however, they broke from the crowd into the open place, and Mrs. Hunt almost sobbed in the joy of escape.

"Oh, it was awful, awful!" she cried. "I wouldn't go through it again for anything in the world. Ah, you are so strong!" and she looked up admiringly at the physician's lithe, muscular form.

Jamieson was filled with pleasure mixed with embarrassment. To cover his confusion he spoke of their return.

"But I can't go back," Mrs. Hunt protested. "And you must not leave me. I'm too nervous—I could not bear to have you go. No, no, you must take me home. Yes, please. Then you can come back and tell Mr. Hunt."

During the swift drive to her house they were both silent. Jamieson's thoughts were in a whirl. He left her at her door, though it was a torture to turn from her, and drove back to Madison Square. When he at last

pushed his way through the throng and came to the box he found the girl alone and distraught.

"Oh," she cried, "I'm so glad you've come. Mr. Hunt—oh, I can't bear to speak of it!—but he's—he's——"

Jamieson needed no more. The girl's great distress awoke him from his rosy dreams; he understood at once.

"Where is he now?" he asked. "I understand. Please, you mustn't worry. I'll look for him," and he went away hastily.

The search was vain. In the end Jamieson was forced to leave word with an attendant, in case Hunt returned, that his party had gone home.

"Perhaps he has forgotten us and gone home," the girl suggested as Jamieson helped her into the carriage; but there was no hope in her voice.

And when they reached the house their fears were realized. The girl left Jamieson in the drawing-room while she went to inquire. He had waited a few moments when Mrs. Hunt entered the room and came to him with outstretched hands.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you again," she said softly. Then, "No, he has not come in," in answer to Jamieson's look of interrogation.

"I shall go out and try to run across him," the physician suggested; but his eyes spoke very different words as he gazed down on the loveliness of the face so close to his own, and he was trembling with the passion the touch of her warm hand provoked, for it still lay in his.

And then he forgot scruples and even prudence, and bent his head and kissed the curved lips—a long, long kiss of delight, that was rudely interrupted by a gasp of amazement. The two sprang guiltily apart, for the girl stood before them staring with amazed, accusing eyes.

For a long minute there was absolute silence. It was broken by the girl, who spoke very low, but with an emphasis of horror.

"Oh, go, go; please go!"

Without a word Jamieson turned and went out, leaving the two women standing there.

All Jamieson's scruples had been as nothing in power compared to the effect of that look of loathing in the girl's eyes. There he read a just valuation of his conduct, without any extenuation from ingenious sophistries. Jamieson remembered his conversations with the girl; in addition to beauty, she possessed intelligence and much feeling. He could close his eyes and see her as she had stared at him in horror; and by the use of his rather vivid imagination he could understand in a measure how heinous his conduct must seem to her pure soul. And at such a time—Jamieson groaned in new disgust for himself.

But usually when he had arrived at the highest pitch of self-accusation the reaction would come. He would feel again the tingling softness of the woman's lips, and his nature thrilled with longing to fly to her, to be with her always, always.

For three days Jamieson heard nothing from any one of the three. Then one day, as he came into his apartments to dress for the evening, he was confronted by a miserable figure huddled in his favorite chair. It took a second glance to recognize in this battered and unkempt object his patient, Hunt.

Evidently Hunt had been on a fearful debauch, and as evidently he had come directly to his physician at the moment of collapse. "As sensible at the last as he was mad at the beginning," Jamieson thought.

It was useless to ask questions. Hunt was almost unconscious. It was a wonder how the man ever managed to find his way to any desired point. Jamieson made a hasty examination, and as it proceeded his face grew very serious. Then he made a second and very careful examination of his patient's heart. And when he had done, "Just one more spree will kill the man—no shadow of doubt!" was his verdict. "As it is, it'll be a job to pull him through this time."

And then Jamieson's face went white. It flashed on him what it would mean to him—to her—were Hunt to die!

Then began a battle between the powers of good and evil in the man's soul. All the force of his love for the beautiful woman urged him to this crime. It was such a negative crime! He had nothing to do—nothing! only to remain passive, to let the man work his own will—let him drink just once more, then die. And afterward, the woman would be free, free for his wooing, for his winning, free for his own before the eyes of all the world. And the man was so useless! A mere wreck, whose existence was a hateful thing to himself and his. It were better for the world and for himself that he should die. The happiness of two hung on his life—and his life was useless—worse than useless! It would be such a little crime, Jamieson thought fiercely, such a tiny, tiny crime!

Then there came into his meditations a memory of the girl's face, with the pure eyes that looked at him with amazement and horror. Beneath that look the savage frenzy in Jamieson's mood quieted, cowered, slunk away. With a sudden reaction toward righteousness, he cried out sharply:

"No, no, I was mad! I never——"

He broke off abruptly, and busied himself with his patient.

"I shall keep him here—and do my best for him," Jamieson muttered. "It might be dangerous to move him. And I'll keep him from drink for a time, anyhow."

When, an hour later, Jamieson had his patient resting quietly he set out to inform Mrs. Hunt of her husband's whereabouts.

It was the first time he had seen her since he had walked shamefaced from her presence at the girl's bidding, and he was keenly sensitive to the magnetic charm of her presence, but he held himself in check while he spoke to her of her husband.

"And when will you send him here?" she asked.

"Not for some time," he answered. "He ought not to be moved."

He told her of the diseased heart and the danger to her husband's life.

"You will need to guard him very carefully, then?" she questioned.

"It is a matter of life and death," Jamieson replied.

She came closer and put her two hands in his, and her eyes were like stars.

"Do not tire yourself out, dear," she said softly. "Your life is more important than his; your happiness is worth—is worth more than—anything else."

A horrible fear clutched at Jamieson's heart. But no, she could not mean——

He looked into the beautiful eyes that were like stars, and his conscience smote him. He had been so full of the thought of crime that he had insulted this fair and noble woman by thinking it possible that she——

But now again the woman spoke, softly, tenderly.

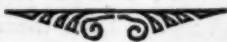
"You know that I love you—you are everything to me; he is nothing. Oh, if I could only be yours—oh, if he should die!"

The woman's lips rose to his and touched them; and her eyes, like stars, told him her meaning.

The man drew away from her caress—and hated her.

In the doctor's apartment that night Hunt, delirious, babbled of his wife's lovers, with whom she played only to cast them aside when she wearied, and the raging husband besought curses on the woman.

And Jamieson, sitting by the man's bedside, listened, sick at heart. A great desire grew in his soul that some time, somewhere, he might see the girl once more, see her and plead for pardon!



THE SERENADE

BENEATH her latticed casement,
He sings a sad refrain,
The cry to battle calls him,
He ne'er may come again.

The plaintive notes, ascending,
Assail milady's ears,
And, at the open window,
Her lovely face appears.

The music swells still louder,
She lifts her arm—whereat,
The bootjack swift descending
Knocks out the Thomas cat.

McLANDBURGH WILSON.



A GREAT INCENTIVE

HE—I suppose Miss de Millions married that poor young artist because she loved him.

SHE—No; because her dearest friend loved him.



SUITABLE

PARKE—I want a motto to put in my cook's room.

LANE—How would "for transients only" do?



CONVENIENT

ST. PETER—Look here, you had a lot of bad habits on earth.

NEW ARRIVAL—That's all right. I had them all checked at the door.

THE WISDOM OF A SATYR

By Mabel Lakin Patterson

A YOUNG Faun, whose life had been lived in the depth of a beautiful forest, fell deeply in love with a gay little Nymph. At first she resented his attentions with shy pleasure, and it was evident she found enjoyment in his marked preference for her. Thus encouraged his ardor knew no bounds. He wove the most marvelous wreaths for her brow and brought bird wings that gleamed with lustre like many jewels.

He would have danced whole evenings with her alone had it not been for a certain wilfulness on her part. It was impossible for him not to observe that her wilfulness increased rather than diminished the more certain she became of his enamoured condition, and although he labored with her earnestly, setting forth his love and devotion, he could not induce her to renounce entirely numerous faun companions and devote herself to him exclusively.

"Why," she would say naively, "I have known them always, I think; at any rate, I cannot remember when I did not know them, and I like them very well. Before you came I never cared for anyone else. I do not wish to slight my friends, as you seem to desire. They would be displeased. I've never asked you to confine your attentions wholly to me. I wish you wouldn't. I'd much rather you would disport yourself a little more. We have always disported ourselves," she would continue, shaking out her golden fleece of hair, "and it's likely we always will. And then, now we have the subject in hand, I wish you would stop glowering at me from behind the trees when I'm

dancing with others. You look ridiculous."

It was unbearable to be talked to like this, yet it always happened so. He could not bring her to a sense of her wrongdoing.

As time went on matters grew worse. Sometimes she would not listen at all to his remonstrances, but, tripping lightly away with her fingers in her ears, she would flee with ripples of laughter floating back to him.

Often she failed to return for hours, when, peeping mischievously at him, she would ask: "Are you here yet? I was afraid you had gone away somewhere, on a trip to lecture. I'm sure you ought to, for you would be a great success."

After which perhaps she would slip her slender fingers in his, and he would be wondrously happy and, at the same time, wretched, for he knew the same thing would happen again, only with variations.

In despair he betook himself to a satyr, for satyrs are very wise when they are not intoxicated. He laid the whole sad affair before him.

The Satyr at first was inclined to laugh and regard the whole matter as a joke. "Oh, nymphs," he said, "are a shilly-shally lot, good enough to dance with of a moonlight night. I've often done that myself, but as for falling in love with them, there's always trouble when it comes to that. Here, take a draught of this wine. It will give you a little nerve. By Apollo, you need it! You look done up."

"I don't want it," replied the disconsolate lover. "And," he said, returning to the subject, "she wasn't half

so shilly-shally as you say before I loved her so well. She was often thoughtful and sweet, and used to tell me that love was best of all, and lately I have not been able to get her to mention it scarcely." And, despairingly, he buried his face in his hands.

"I'll tell you what to do," said the Satyr, with decision, "but I doubt if you will do it. When one is so badly done up as you there is just about no hope. If you will do identically as I tell you, in a very short time you can have the silly thing at your side as docile as you please."

"I cannot believe it," answered the Faun. "You do not know her."

"Oh, I don't!" replied the Satyr scornfully. "All right if I don't. I know her and all the rest of her sort. And if I were you," looking admiringly at the perfect body gleaming like ivory against the background of leafage—"well, I'd have a deal of fun with that precious nymph, knowing as much as I do."

"How would you go about it?" inquired the Faun, without any animation.

"I'd comb my hair first thing and fix up generally," said the Satyr, "and then I'd neither avoid her nor seek her out. I dare say you have paid no attention to any of the rest. I'd hunt out the very prettiest of the crowd and hang around her, and when the little flirty Nymph comes looking you up be engrossed and a little surprised to see her; talk of the weather and how the gray-green of the sky melts into the blue of the lake, and so on. Keep it up. That will be the trouble with you; you'll melt at the first reproachful glance."

"I do not believe I shall," replied the Faun; "at least I shall make a strong effort to do as you say."

"If you give in before the right time you are done for," emphasized the Satyr.

"I have a notion to go along with you and be a sort of mentor," said the instructor. "I see you are in a bad way, and I want a change myself. Besides," he added, "I really like you, and as I like but very few I can

afford to take a little trouble for those few."

They set out together, and ere long came upon a gay company of nymphs and fauns in the very height of a summer evening revel.

"Which one?" demanded the Satyr.

"Over there close by the largest tree," answered his pupil.

"She is the homeliest one in the whole party," said the Satyr.

"Is she?" returned the Faun indifferently.

"Yes, she is," said the Satyr; "but then I might have expected it. Go now and select the prettiest one you can see, and dance with her. Talk with her a long time, then come to me." But the Faun was already gazing with longing eyes at his love, and did not answer.

"Do you want the whole jig to be up?" inquired the Satyr, pulling him by the arm and repeating his commands.

"It won't do any good," said the despondent one.

"Go at once, or I'll leave you and go in for a time myself," and the Satyr pushed him forward.

Thus abjured the Faun wended his steps toward a beautiful, star-eyed creature, who received his invitation to dance with every indication of satisfaction, and afterward willingly sat with him on a mossy bank watching the gay throng.

While she was as beautiful as a dream and her eyes were the blue of the first violets, he could scarce keep his attention from wandering to where he knew the golden hair he loved was floating here and there, as its restless owner disported herself, and sent covert side glances in his direction.

At last the Faun, returning, found the Satyr in a state of great glee. "You did it better than I thought you would, upon my word. Kept your back on her right along. Now, once again, someone else. Don't wait; it's as good as anything I ever saw and, let me tell you, things are coming your way."

"I haven't noticed it," said the Faun.

"That is because you had your back turned where it should be. Take a fresh start."

The encouraged Faun did as he was told, and before the revel was over he could not but observe that, though his little love laughed as much as ever, her face was paler, and he thought once, as her hand touched his in the weaving interchange of the dance, that her fingers clung to his. But, remembering the Satyr's admonition, he smiled and passed on.

Retracing his steps to the thicket where the Satyr awaited him, he said: "I did not melt—but there is no one like her."

"Bah!" laughed the Satyr, "the woods are full of them. However, I commend you, and I think another evening, if you do as well, we will witness a complete capitulation; and, by Venus! never forget what I tell you, keep it always before her. 'There are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught.' I don't know who first said that. It's true, anyhow. It's the whole secret when you come to deal with nymphs."

The next evening it was plain to the blindest that the small, yellow-headed Nymph was not herself. She laughed and frolicked, but ever and anon she would be missed, and on her return

a certain dimness about her eyes was remarked, and often and again they looked wistfully in the direction of the young Faun, who did not avoid her nor yet seek her out, and was, no doubt, enjoying himself very much in the society of the rest.

Presently she stole to his side, whispering: "What have I done? Have you forgotten?"

"Forgotten?" he asked, in evident astonishment.

"Oh, nothing—I," she said, "was thinking of our talks in the forest," and he could see the fluttering of her lip.

"I remember one of them, when you asked me why I did not disport myself. I never knew why I did not, but I know you believed it to be true that it is better to be gay."

He stopped, for a great tear rolled down her cheek.

"Come here by me," he said, with a new love of authority and command in his voice. She came quickly, her swimming eyes full of wonder upon his face.

He did not ask the Satyr if the time was come in its fulness for he knew it had; so he drew her to him, saying: "I remember our talks, and I am going to profit by what I remember. It is high time."



A BETTER WAY OF PUTTING IT

BRIGGS—Did Wimpleton marry a girl with a million?

GRIGGS—No, he married a million with a girl.



THEIR ORIGIN

"**W**HERE did those people spring from?"

"From a corner in wheat."

VARIANT VIEWS

HE wooed her by soft moonbeams' light,
 And seemed to suit her mood aright;
 He left her, with glad heart astir,
 Betrothed, to sleep and dream of her.
 He met her in the broad sunrise;
 She looked at him in cool surprise
 When he presumed on fancied vow.
 Said she, "Refer not to last night!
 That was all moonshine then—but now
 I see things in a different light."

G. B.



A CONFESSION

THE WIFE—All my friends warned me that you wouldn't make me a good husband.
 THE HUSBAND—Then why did you marry me—to reform me?
 "No, dear; to prove that they were wrong."



INTERESTED IN HIM

BLANCHE—You aren't thinking of marrying Archibald, are you?
 BELLE—Of course I am. Hasn't he a future?
 "Yes, to be sure. But why jeopardize it?"



IT WAS EMPTY

KEYES—Grinder is in a bad way with writer's cramp.
 STUBBS—Can he use his hand at all?
 KEYES—Oh, his hand's all right; it's in his stomach.

A TWENTIETH-CENTURY PASSION

By Bertrand W. Babcock

WHEN the Martins first turned their eyes suburbward it was not without some regret at the thought of giving up their cozy New York apartments. They had been very happy together in this their first home. Its dimensions, true, were limited, but up to the present it had at least been as large as their purse. But lately Fortune had smiled in kindly wise upon the young couple. In a generous moment she had not only bestowed upon them a snug little sum of money left by an unthought-of aunt, but had also brought to the tiny apartment a little baby.

Now a sunny, burlapped apartment is the quintessence of attractiveness to a young married couple, who often rejoice in its very smallness. But greater space is desirable when children come. This the Martins at once perceived, and with the self-sacrifice peculiar to young parents they decided to take a house in some suburb.

Charley Martin was a newspaper man previous to the legacy that had come to him, and with the carelessness of future fortune peculiar to this type of worker he at once retired from active newspaper life, since it was no longer actually necessary to earn the weekly wage. He would now gratify the ambition of the literary aspirant and employ his leisure in writing more serious stuff than the work assigned to a newspaper reporter. He rather liked the idea of a house "somewhere in the country"—he always alluded to it as "the country"—where he would be far from the noise of the city. In his immediate search for a desirable place he speedily traveled over the environs

of New York. New Jersey and Brooklyn were cheaper, but Una disliked the ferries and the Bridge. So there was nothing left save to go in the one direction through which the island of Manhattan extends—Bronxward.

In Morris Heights, a portion of Greater New York, they found the place, a red Queen Anne cottage covered with Boston ivy, set in a lot fifty by a hundred.

With the usual enthusiasm of the new commuter, they fell upon the garden with a zest and zeal inspiring. Una planted flowers promiscuously on the lawn before the house, and Charley planted vegetables, recklessly and with much "exercise" labor, in the back part. The house was really artistic, home-like, light and airy. The baby gained a pound and a half a month.

There was a stable belonging to the place—a very pretty stable over which clambered a large grapevine, and every time that the man worked at his garden at the back he looked at the stable regretfully. She, too, would sigh a bit when she sat at the back doorstep watching him dig.

One day he looked up and said:

"Una, do you think we could afford a horse?"

She looked doubtful and thoughtful. It had reduced the "fund" materially to furnish the house appropriately; the baby had proved precious indeed; the cook and nurse had both darkly referred to the bigger wages of neighboring cooks and nurses, and, of course, they were not having any regular amount coming in. Still, the man was sure to sell his lovely stories, and she could wear many of her last summer

frocks out here where the people had never seen them before. Nearly everyone in the neighborhood kept a horse. Who ever heard of living in the country horseless? And so:

"Are horses dreadfully dear, Charley?"

"Naw! I could get one for, well—er—let me see. I believe we could pick up a nice little mare for, say, fifty dollars."

"Oh, Charley, now, I don't want a frisky horse—one that'd run off with us."

"You don't want a Virginia creeper, do you?" he asked smilingly. She was from Virginia and flew to the championship of the dear old South.

"Charley Martin, if you talk like that we sha'n't get *any* horse at all. You are always poking fun at the South. It's not half as slow as Massachusetts" (he was from Massachusetts), "and besides, Charles Paul" (the baby) "is half a Virginian."

"Whew!" exclaimed Charley, pushing back his hat and mopping his brow; "what a peroration!"

"Well, I don't care!"

"Well, I do care, Una. There, don't be cross, Miss Firefly. Joke—just a joke!" And he kissed her till she was smiling.

"Well, now, how about the horse, Pussy?"

"Barkis is willin'."

"So'm I. What's the use of an empty stable, anyhow?"

"Of course. Let's get a horse at once. Suppose we go to town right now and get one. I can leave the baby for three hours, the doctor says."

"Good. But—er—we ought to get a horse in the country better than the city, don't you think?"

"What! an old farmer's horse! I'm from Virginia, where the horses are noted for their qualities. I want a thoroughbred. We'll have to look up a regular—er—er—horseman!"

"Well, I know a fellow who covered the sporting news on our paper. Let's look him up."

"*Just* the thing! If we're going to have a horse at all we might just as

well have a fine little blooded creature."

So they went to town. They had no difficulty in finding Snarkey of the *Journal*. He received his former associate in newsgathering with cordiality and appeared to be so glad to see him that he continued shaking the pretty Una's hand while he talked to her husband.

"Well, how are you, Charley? You're the lucky lad. Heard all about it. Came into a million, eh? I tell you what, things don't come everybody's way like that. Damn it all, Martin—I beg your pardon, Mrs. Martin." He cleared his throat and released her little hand, which she looked at ruefully.

"What a horrid, loud creature, and what a brute to hurt my hand so!" was her thought.

Charley, however, had expanded considerably under the other's words. He felt that common instinct of the man come back to his old associates in a prosperous guise. He did not deny the other's accusation that he had come into a "million."

"Yes, the little windfall *was* welcome."

"Well, I should say," agreed Snarkey. "Where are you living now—the Waldorf?"

"No, no. We have a house in—"

"A house in New York! Gee!"

Morris Heights *was* part of New York. Our hero did not deny that allegation, either.

"The fact is, Snarkey, we want to buy a—a—some horses."

"Horses! You are going in for racing?"

"Oh, no. We want——"

Here Una broke in sweetly. She had perceived her husband's delicate position from the first and sympathized with him deeply.

"We want a fine, thoroughbred horse," she said, "just for everyday use."

"Oh, I see."

"And Charley thought you could direct us to the proper parties to purchase from."

"H'm! Let me think. You want a thoroughbred—an extra fine—a—what are you willing to pay?"

"Well, the fact is, Snarkey, I've really no idea of the value of horses," said Charley diffidently.

"But down South in Virginia," put in Una, "we could get a beauty for fifty dollars."

"Oh, come, come, Mrs. Martin, not for a fifty."

She blushed and pouted bewitchingly.

"Yes, really," she said.

"Well, you can't get no thoroughbred for that," said Snarkey decidedly. Then, addressing himself to Charley: "Women are 'way off always on the subject of horses." He laughed.

"Well, Snarkey, what would it cost?" asked Charley.

"Yes, what *would* it?" Una added. "We want one at any price," this last very proudly.

"We-ell, to get a real, fine, cracka-jack thoroughbred, a little muscly, swell highstepper, I should say you might pick one up at five hundred—and that'd be an uncommon bargain."

"Five hundred dollars!" gasped Una Martin, and clung weakly to her Charley. "Why, that's—that's not—so—very—much," she finished bravely. She felt acutely that Charley's pride before his former associate must be saved at any cost.

"Five hundred dollars!" repeated Charley. "That's rather stiff, old man."

"Not for the article."

"Well, say five hundred dollars, then. Can we see such an animal? We've not a great while to spare——"

"I have got to get back in three hours," said Una positively. One of the three hours was already gone.

Snarkey scratched his head thoughtfully.

"I know a chap who wants to sell his horse and rig—dandy little trap—you'll want a carriage, of course?"

"Of course," said Una faintly. They had really forgotten all about that.

"Well, this fellow's a friend of mine, and I believe I could get you the outfit for a thousand—dirt cheap at that."

Una sat down helplessly, but, nevertheless, she was very proud of her husband when she heard him say: "Well, let's see it, anyhow. Of course I know we can't get a horse and rig for nothing."

Snarkey grinned.

"I should say not," said he; "and by the way, Martin, I know a man who'd make a good coachman for you if you have none yet."

Charley moved uneasily. Una shook her head at him from behind Snarkey.

"Oh, I'll look into that myself afterward," said Charley nonchalantly.

All of a sudden Snarkey bethought himself of another scheme, and he struck Charley Martin upon the shoulder with vehemence.

"By Jove, I must be dopy not to have thought of it before. Why don't you two get an automobile?"

"Automobile!"

"Automobile!"

The word escaped the young couple's lips simultaneously. They had never even dreamed of such a thing.

Charley spoke bluntly at last.

"We can't afford it," he said shortly.

"Oh, go on. It's cheaper than a horse, man."

"Oh, no——"

"I know what I'm talking about. A horse costs a few dollars less than an auto to buy it, but to *keep* the horse there's its feed and housing and a man to care for it and——"

"Well, if it comes to that I can do all that myself. I was always good at mechanical things."

"Ha! ha! Mechanical—that's good! My dear boy, did you ever currycomb a horse?"

"No, but——"

"My dear Mrs. Martin"—he turned to Una—"how would you like your husband to come to the table smelling of the stables?"

"It would be awful—perfectly awful!" said Una, with tears in her big blue eyes. "Charley, I c-couldn't

bear it." She was beginning to feel quite hysterical.

"Well, what shall we do then?"

"Get an automobile."

"Oh, let's!" said Una, fairly trembling in anticipation of the sensation she would create among her former friends, all of whom were in modest circumstances.

"What would it cost?" inquired the weakening Charley.

"You could get a Flyte touring-car for thirty-five hundred, and a Flyte runabout for a thousand."

"We only want a runabout," said Una quickly.

So they went over to the Flyte auto exchange, and Snarkey, with a word aside to the superintendent of the shops, betrayed the guileless ones and left them.

They looked at all the machines in the shop, scarcely hiding their awe beneath their flurried questions. The moment Charley Martin began to look at the machines a queer sort of glow ran through him. He had always loved machinery. These automobiles set his very heart a-thumping. As for Una, the young and inexperienced and therefore vain, they represented social elevation to her. She called them "just dear things," and so they were.

Then the crucial trial was made, and the two were taken on a delirious flying trip through Central Park. The experience was giddy. They stepped from the machine, their hearts intoxicated. Without further ado they bought and paid cash for a little one-seated runabout. Charley was to come down each day for a week until he had learned to run it. Then he was to take it home. They felt as if treading on air when they left the shops. Una squeezed Charley's arm excitedly.

"Oh, Charley," she said, "wasn't it just splendid!"

Charley nodded.

"But," Una continued, "it was awfully expensive, and we'll have to go short on other things."

"Pussy," said her husband, stop-

ping short, "I'll work hard and make up for it. That machine is to be used only at certain times. It will be a rest—an inspiration. But I must earn the right to ride in it each day. I'll write all morning and ride all—"

"All afternoon," finished Una. "How lovely!"

But when they reached the New York Central station Una's good nature vanished. She discovered they had been gone four and a half hours, and there would not be a train for another fifteen minutes. Her little baby was starving! How thoughtless and cruel they had been! When would that train come? She never had wanted an automobile, anyhow. She had always despised them. People who rode in them just thought they owned the earth, and rode over everybody else, and oh, dear! Charles Paul would starve! And that train! Why didn't that hateful man open the gate, anyhow? The train was there. What was the sense of keeping them standing outside when they might just as well be comfortably seated in the auto-train! How on earth did she come to say "auto"? She was so angry with herself that she kept silence exactly twenty seconds, and then: "Oh, Charley, don't be so dumb! Why don't you speak to that trainman? I'm so tired! That's what we get for burying ourselves in the country, and our poor, little, helpless, innocent, hungry— Oh, there, that gate's open at last!"

Charley's head throbbed a bit by the time they reached the house. For the first time he found himself thinking of his wife as something other than an angel, and when the fat baby was discovered sound asleep, none the worse for a possibly needed fast, he felt justifiably angry with her. Thus the insidious automobile had wrought mischief before even entering the home.

The following day, betimes, saw Charley Martin running for an early-morning train. Charley had thought and dreamed all night of flying through the air on strange electric wings. The

sensation of freedom, of speed, of delirious elation, was enchanting. It was like an opium dream of pleasure. He had an early breakfast, and as Una had not awakened when he had finished he went to her room and knocked till she called in a sleepy voice:

"What is it, Fanny?"

"It's I, Una."

He opened the door and went in softly. She sighed and moved about on her pillow sleepily.

"I'm going out—" he began.

"Oh, goodness, I've been awake half the night with the baby. Can't you even let me get a little morning rest?"

"Yes, dearest, but—but—I'm going out to—to the automobile place, Una."

"Oh, bother the automobile!" said Una, with sleepy savagery, and turned her face to the wall. He crossed on tiptoe and kissed her. She murmured drowsily:

"Do be careful now, and don't get blown up. There, then! Don't smother me. Good-bye. . . . Oh, you've awakened him!"

She sat up angry now, and Charley disappeared from the room before she could turn her attention from the baby which was now crying loudly.

He proved an apt pupil, so they told him at the automobile shop. The superintendent thought he could run the machine himself before a week. At noon Charley was laughing confidently. He had run the machine, unaided, half a dozen times through Central Park, and the man who sat on the seat beside him said he'd never seen anyone learn so quickly. By three in the afternoon Charley was quite sure he could take the machine home that day, and the automobile people, glad, now that the sale was done, to be rid of him and the run-about, thought so too.

Charley went through the Park intrepidly, with rather more than the speed he had thus far allowed himself; but once away from the watchful eye of the "demonstrator" he felt more confidence in himself.

His troubles began when he left the Park. The streets confused him, and once or twice, intending to slacken speed, he pushed the lever the wrong way, which caused the machine to bound forward. Going down a slight incline the brake refused to work, and he spun down the hill at a rapid speed. When he was able to stop he got out and adjusted the brake. They had told him how. It worked perfectly after that. Things went smoothly for a time; then, in passing through a street on which was a public school, the children hooted at him shrilly: "Get a horse! get a horse!" It made him nervous, particularly so when some Italian workmen joined in the cry of the youngsters and a couple of young girls laughed at him.

He crossed Washington Bridge and was soon well on the road home, when suddenly there was a great sizzling under the machine and a jet of fierce steam puffed from beneath the water-glass. He stopped with a jerk. He examined the machine and all seemed right, but for precaution's sake he turned out the fire. Something was wrong—what, he could not tell. He tinkered with it a bit, but failed to solve the problem, and mindful of Una's injunction not to get blown up, he decided not to attempt to run it farther.

And so, for more than two hours, he remained stuck in the road, waiting for some passing horse-drawn vehicle to pull him home. Those he accosted were unwilling. Some drivers laughed and jeered at him; others ignored him. The automobilist is universally and unreasonably detested by the drivers of all other kinds of vehicles. Toward dusk a great dray, drawn by four enormous horses, came along. Charley made what he intended to be a last appeal, holding up a bill in his hand and shouting: "Five dollars!"

The driver got down, stolidly tied the automobile to the back of the dray, and thus, ignominiously pulled by four stout horses, a huge dray between, sitting discomfited on the seat in order to guide it, Charley Martin took home his automobile.

II

THEY enjoyed their purchase for a time. Some days they would leave in the morning, taking the baby with them, and spin across the country, along the Sound, through Pelham Bay, and stop at New Rochelle, where they had friends. The trip would cost only a few gallons of gasoline—they always said "only." But they rode the machine every day, morning, afternoon and sometimes night. It was a thing of joy. It had wings. It was a witch, for it soothed as nothing else could the throbbing head, and fairly drove from it the thoughts of the intended author of the great American novel to come.

But at the end of the second week Una, looking into Charley's account-book, discovered they had spent twenty-two dollars on gasoline, had had to have the water-glass mended twice, costing twenty-four dollars—part of this for hauling the machine to town—and had bought twenty dollars' worth of tools and a new water pump, costing five dollars. She upbraided Charley so fiercely that he swore he would not ride in the automobile again until she begged to be taken. But he was so loving to her all the following day that in the afternoon she "begged."

It was shortly after this that the boiler burned out, and that was a serious matter. They paid a bill of fifty-five dollars. New pipes had to be put in the boiler and the old ones patched. Una cried bitterly about it. She accused her husband of overdoing the sport. He had run about in the automobile until the boiler had burst. Charley, tired of what he termed her "ceaseless nagging over his one pleasure," went out in the machine and did not return till night. This was not his fault, however. He had intended going only as far as Van Cortlandt Park, but on the way something went wrong with the fire-box and he couldn't get home. They ate dinner in complete silence. When Charley, later, kissed the baby Una bade the nurse put the latter instantly to bed. The moment

the nurse had left the room she turned upon her husband.

"Charles Martin, don't dare to touch my baby! It's only hypocrisy on your part. You've plainly proved that you think more of a dirty, greasy machine than of us." With that she went into her own room and locked the door.

Charley retired to his study, where Una supposed he was thinking over her words and feeling properly sorry for his behavior. But Charley was tired with his day's experiences, and when Una tiptoed to the keyhole and listened the brute was plainly snoring.

When it became known among Charley Martin's friends that he possessed an automobile they sought him out. In a short time the Martins no longer felt that first sense of loneliness which their somewhat isolated position in the semi-country might have induced. The distance from downtown to Morris Heights was nothing to the man who wanted an automobile ride, and Charley had reason to "show off" the machine each day. This pleased and delighted him. The little runabout was his darling and pride.

"Now, you see, Una," he said one day at luncheon, as he was hastily eating his meal, "it's not nearly so dead out here as we thought it would be. I tell you what, your real friends will look you up wherever you are."

"Yes, your *real* friends," said Una, with only half-veiled sarcasm. Charley was not blessed with the virtue of amiability in these days. He had always so much to do, so many places to go, that these little sneering expressions of Una's irritated him intensely. He set down his glass now.

"What do you mean by that remark?"

"Just what I said," she retorted.

"Do you mean to cast a slur upon my friends?"

"That's right, Charley; they are always *your* friends who come here."

Charley pushed his chair back. His eyes looked ugly.

"Well, what of it?"

"They don't come to see you—you needn't flatter yourself," she said, with a sneer.

She had never before seen her husband look quite so cruel. His eyes were narrowed, his jaw protruded. Una got up and stood waiting for the words she knew would come.

"I suppose they come to see *you*," he said, with meaning.

She had become white with anger, and her lip trembled so that she could not speak. Without a word to him she left the room. He followed her, really sorry and ashamed of himself.

"I didn't mean that, Una."

She looked up at him strangely, her large blue eyes almost black and brilliant with some inward excitement.

"I am becoming used to your insults," she said.

"You are eternally driving me to say unpleasant things. Why don't you let a fellow alone? What's the use in wrangling over little trifles?"

"Is it 'little trifles' to lose one's servants through your actions?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"You do. You never are here for your meals on time. You start out in the morning and rush in at two or three for your luncheon. You never are home for dinner before seven. Fanny is going to leave. She says she won't stand it."

"I'll talk with Fanny. These colored girls are easily soothed."

Una smiled bitterly and turned away to stare out through the window at what once had been the beginnings of a vegetable garden. It was now an amazing mass of weeds and half-grown vegetables, full of bugs and mosquitos. She covered her eyes from the sight of it. Instantly Charley seized her and drew her into his arms.

"Oh, Pussy, now don't cry—don't cry, sweetheart! Why didn't you tell me before what was worrying you? I'll fix Fanny—raise her wages or—"

"We can't afford to pay her more," said Una, releasing herself. "We can't afford it," she repeated.

"Well, Fanny's easily managed. You know, Una, you want to use some

tact with a colored girl. Instead of scolding her when she does wrong, if you'd—"

Una made an indescribable gesture.

"Don't! don't!" she said. "Every word you say makes it harder—harder for me to bear it."

"Bear what? What are you talking about?"

She burst out passionately. Her heart had been overburdened long.

"You! I can't bear you any longer. You are unreliable. You have no ballast to your character. You have let everything go to ruin to gratify your pleasure—no, your actual lust, for that miserable automobile! It has become a mania with you."

He was pale as she now, and as angry.

"Take care, Una—take care what you say!"

"I will not!" she cried, now thoroughly aroused. "I have stood it long enough. You promised to work when we came here. What have you done?"

"We've been here only three months," he muttered sullenly.

"Three months!" she repeated shrilly. "Ah, but that has been time enough for you to waste several thousand dollars on a folly—"

"Now you are exaggerating, as usual."

"No, I am not!"

"Oh, yes. We have not spent *several* thousand."

"We have! I've seen your account-book. It—it made me—sick."

There was silence for a space. Then she went nearer to him and put her hand imploringly on his arm.

"Charley, don't waste any more time on that machine. Our money will be all gone before we know, and nothing—absolutely nothing to show for it."

"Oh, well," said Charley sullenly, "no one expected it to last forever. When it goes I can return to newspaper work, so far as that goes."

Her hand dropped from his arm.

"There is no use arguing with you," she said hopelessly.

"What do you want me to do, Una? Do you want me to give away our automobile?"

"No. You can sell it."

"What would I get for it?"

"You would save all you would be spending on it if we kept it."

"Oh, pshaw! the amount to run it costs no more than what you spent on hats last year."

"It's not the gasoline bill, though that's big enough, but the repairs—they've cost more than the machine twice over."

"That's because the boiler burst four times. Now I understand it and know how to handle it. There won't be any more such accidents."

But a few days later a leak sprang in the gasoline tank, and he came within an inch of being blown up. The leak was mended. Then a couple of the tires gave out.

They cost twenty-five dollars apiece. He procured new ones. He also bought a new kind of automatic pump. The boiler gave him some more trouble, and he decided to have an entirely new one put in. Also, the water tank sprang a leak and had to be mended. He bought a new patent torch for lighting and heating the fire.

September found him a complete slave to the machine, as complete a slave as the drunkard is to his drink. He was simply possessed of an insatiate craving to be off, his hand upon the lever, whirling along through the sweet-smelling air, his mind too intent upon guiding the machine to think of the petty trials and troubles of everyday life. He learned to love the smell of gasoline. The noise of the engine, going chug, chug, chug, was as music to his ears. He made the acquaintance of other automobilists and fell a victim to the smooth tongue of another automobile agent. He rode two or three times in a large, double-seated touring-car, and became conscious of a restless longing to possess such a machine. His own small runabout seemed tame and slow after his experience in the wonderful monster. He did not broach the subject to his wife, however, until he had actually bought one of these models, and for some days had

kept it at the shop of the man who sold him gasoline. One day Una asked:

"What's become of your automobile? I have not seen it lately in the barn, and I thought baby and I might have a ride today."

Charley smiled foolishly.

"The fact is, Una—the fact is—" he began, but could go no further.

"Well?" she prompted suspiciously. "You don't mean to tell me it has broken down again?"

"Oh, dear, no! The fact is—well—er—I sold it."

"Sold it!" She started up, surprised. "Why, Charley!"

"Yes, I sold it," repeated Charley; "that is, I—er—exchanged it."

Una paled with apprehension, and he continued hastily:

"You see, Una, the baby was getting too heavy for you to hold in your arms in the carriage, and I thought if I got a two-seated auto the nurse could—"

"How much did you pay?" Her voice was hoarse.

"My dear Una, it was a bargain—a ridiculous bargain. Why, they allowed me for my old, patched-up machine four hundred and fifty dollars, and—"

"We paid a thousand for it only six months ago, and heaven knows how much more since for repairs."

"That's just it, Una. It was a badly made machine. Now, the new one is so perfectly built it can't get out of repair. What's more, it takes only half the quantity of gasoline, and I don't have to carry nearly so much water. In fact, it has a system of pipes—"

She buried her face in her hands on the table and sobbed:

"How could you do it? How could you? How could you?"

He watched her uneasily, but did not attempt to soothe her. She lifted her wet face.

"Charley, how much did it cost?"

He told her the first deliberate lie.

"Una, it was an exchange. I gave him our nineteen-hundred-and-three

model for his nineteen-hundred-and—and—one model."

"You paid nothing more?"

"Nothing," he said; but he did not look at her.

He went out quickly after that, and she did not see him all the rest of the day.

She did not believe him. Her suspicions were heavy upon her all day. Toward evening she went to the door of his study and found it locked. She opened it with another key, which fortunately fitted.

Charley came home early—early for him. It was half-past six when his new motor-car puffed and steamed into the back yard, filling all the neighborhood with its noise and odor. He blew his horn to call Una's attention to his return, but she did not come down to the door, as was her wont. He turned off the fire, let the steam out a bit and went indoors, drawing off his well-burned and oiled gloves as he passed through the kitchen.

"Where is Mrs. Martin?" he asked Fanny.

"Upstairs," she replied.

"Dinner ready?" he inquired.

"One hour ago," said Fanny grimly.

He left a quarter for her on the table, and her large mouth grinned when she saw it. She was making at this rate two dollars extra a week.

Charley went through the deserted drawing-room and up the stairs. Una was not in her room. The baby was screaming loudly in the nursery. He was being undressed for bed—something he fiercely and daily resented as hard as two little fat heels and enormous lungs could do. Thinking Una was in there, Charley was about to enter, when he suddenly noticed that his door was partially open. He remembered he had locked it. He went in hastily. Una sat at his large table-desk, his account-book spread open before her. For a moment the two looked at each other without speaking. Then she stood up and spoke tensely.

"Liar!" she said. "Liar!"

"Una!"

"Liar!" she repeated.

He recognized the paper in her hand—the receipted bill for \$3,500 for the touring-car.

"Well?" he said, throwing his cap recklessly across the room, "what are you going to do about it?"

She could not speak for the intensity of her rage. He felt sorry for her. He went toward her impetuously.

"Don't look like that, little girl. I'll sell the damned thing. Upon my word, I will this time. This is the last of it—upon my honor!"

"You have no honor," she said, and threw the mass of bills she held in her hand in his face. He had not time to resent her action, for in a moment she had left the room. He went to the seat she had vacated and sat looking ruefully at the condition of his desk. The account-book, open at a certain page, revealed the fact that she knew just the amount left to them, \$1,800 out of \$10,000.

The dinner gong sounded loudly and he went down to the dining-room at once. Una was not at the table. He began his meal without her, but after a time he told Fanny to inform her mistress that dinner was ready.

"Mrs. Martin is outside—in the yard, sir."

A foreboding came upon him. He jumped up from his seat, dashed through the hall and kitchen and out into the back yard. It was dark, and he could see only the outlines of the automobile, standing there by the stable door. But he heard something that made the blood rush to his head. Then he saw Una with the raised axe in her hands.

"What are you doing?" he cried hoarsely, and rushed upon her.

In a moment he saw the wreck she had wrought, and a veritable groan of anguish escaped his lips. Then the axe dropped from her hands and she ran to him and threw her arms about his neck.

"Charley! Charley!"

"It cost three thousand five hundred dollars!" he said dully.

"And we have only eighteen hundred left!" she sobbed. "You can never buy another."

"This is vandalism," he said heavily.

"It is economy," said she.

The sight of the magnificent thing all battered and broken, for she had done her work well, sickened him. He turned away from it, staggering toward the house.

"We can sell it for junk," she said piteously.

He did not answer.

"And Charley," she continued pleadingly, "you will have to work soon, for our money will not last much longer, and baby needs new things every day."

Still he did not answer. He seemed to be thinking painfully. They were standing on the back steps now, he leaning against the door, she below him, holding his hand.

"You can get back on the *Journal*," she said.

He shook his head.

"I won't do newspaper work again," he muttered.

"You'll have to do something," she said.

"Yes—that is what I was thinking about."

He moved away uncertainly.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

He stopped and looked at her. In the darkness he could see her white, pleading face, with the wet tears upon it.

"You did right," he said, "right to break it. It was the plaything of a king. But I loved it—I don't know why. It—it enthralled me. And I can't give it up, Una, even now."

She began to cry, very pitifully, and he drew her to him gently, encircling her with his arm.

"There, little girl, I have been a brute, and I did lie to you. But I won't again. I'm going to tell you what I shall do. I know a fellow—a millionaire, Una, who keeps a dozen automobiles. I'm going to see him about a position."

"What kind of a position, Charley?"

"Chauffeur," he answered bluntly.

"I'd rather be that than anything else." She broke from his arms. There was positive agony in her voice.

"You don't mean it—you can't mean it!"

"I do."

"Charley, think of me, think of Charles Paul!"

"I'm not ashamed of the work," he answered doggedly, "and it's all I'm fit for, anyhow. I can get eighteen dollars, or even twenty dollars a week, and I can spend my life whirling about in all kinds of machines. It's the only life worth while in this twentieth century. I'm going to follow it."

He stooped and kissed her fondly.

"Don't cry, little Una. You'll get used to it soon, and—and—Una, I'm going to be kinder to you and see more of you and Charles Paul in the future."



A SIMILARITY

GILES—The jury was out all night, but failed to agree.

MRS. GILES—Well, you can never agree with anybody when you have been out all night.



THE "dead broke" wave is truly curious. It usually strikes an entire circle of friends at the same time.

MOORED

By Anna A. Rogers

"**I**S Miss Hester dependent upon him in any way? I mean upon his boarding here?" came from the curving depths of the hammock, which eclipsed all of Mrs. Poyet but a pretty spill-over of lace and lawn and two dainty patent-leather toe-tips.

And Joan Conover—wife and mother—sitting in the low wicker chair, her brown head bowed over a work-table, laughed, but continued cutting until she achieved an acute angle. Then she leaned back and emphasized her remarks with the huge pair of shears.

"Dependent upon him? Why, Cloelia, the Archibalds would be rich—rich even for these days—if Aunt Hester would only sell the land. Her brother only laughs about it, because he laughs at everything; but her sister, Mrs. Pattison—Aunt Clarice, you know—has no patience with the whole situation. Fortunately she was left quite a comfortable home and fortune by her husband, who was killed the first year of the Civil War—on the Northern side, mark you! And the Archibalds are borderland rebels *à la* Maryland, if you know what that means. Aunt Hester never entirely forgave her, so there has always been a little friction between them. Not one foot of the old estate will be sold while Aunt Hester lives—hence the 'guests'—for heaven's sake, never say boarders at The Oaks! And as for Professor Pfarre, he's lived here for years for next to nothing, and has made a pathetic slave of dear old Miss Archibald. He has imbued her with the idea that he is the jugular vein of modern scientific thought. Any little stab

at him and exact science would bleed to death before our very eyes! He has deliberately underpaid his bills here at The Oaks for years—Aunt Clarice told me—counting upon two things securely: in the first place, Miss Archibald is a gentlewoman to her finger-tips—this aunt of my husband's—and, in the second place, she has the awe of her generation for learning."

"Awe for that little scientific cad! That czar in the empire of egoism! That miserable, selfish— But Joan dear, why does her brother allow it? What does he say?"

"Oh, Uncle Torm is too funny about it! Do take him off to the mushroom meadow and ask him his opinion of Simon Pfarre, Ph.D. Short of the mushroom meadow, he will be distinctly heard by the entire household."

"Then you think Miss Hester Archibald, gentlewoman, would be the gainer by the unkenneled of this—this von Humboldt? Now, think before you answer, for I've got an inspiration."

"Oh, Cloelia, please don't! I've only got you for a few weeks, and I know what it means when you have an inspiration about a man."

"You haven't answered my question," quoth the hammock imperturbably, and the toes twitched with impatience.

"Of course, of course! Aunt Hester has long thought that death alone would ever relieve her of this sacred incubus, although she is too courteous even to whisper it to me. She's worn to the bone by his selfish exactions."

"Yes, but if he goes there's Miss Archibald's best room vacant on her

hands! I could take it, but only for a little while."

"That's all you know of us at The Oaks! Why, dear old Admiral Sproull has written twice a year for board here for two years—ever since his retirement and residence in Washington. Ah, Cloelia, there's a man! He's Lord Chesterfield, Major Pendennis, the Vicar of Wakefield, Paul Jones and two or three others all rolled into one, and brought up to date mentally."

"Good gracious!" sneered the hammock, and a delicate hand punched the pillows into position. Then after a moment's silence Mrs. Poyet's light, flexible voice announced:

"Well, that settles it—and him. Behold the ousting of the Ph.D.!" and further than that the hammock refused to explain, notwithstanding Mrs. Conover's threats and pleadings.

"No, Joan, not a word. I noticed ages ago that the—what do you call it?—the propelling power of an undertaking is reduced by explanation, boasting, words of any sort. It's an escape of valuable steam; it's a dead loss. I verily believe that the reason there are so few big things done, individually, in the world today is because it's a talking age. After Professor Pfarre is evicted, beloved Joan, we'll talk it over."

"Evicted?"

"Evicted."

The stopping of a trolley-car at the carriage gate at the end of the lane caused both young women to look up—Mrs. Poyet popping up on her elbows an instant, and again disappearing—and the slow, impressive approach of the little Ph.D. himself changed the conversation.

Although Simon Pfarre was such a scrap of a man, he irresistibly suggested an elephant, in his curves and disproportions, at least. Especially elephantine was the inadequacy of that fleshy sloping back. Elephantine was the large, projecting head with its elongated ears, the receding forehead, the tiny, restless black eyes, the long nose at an obtuse angle with the thin, smooth upper lip.

His very complexion bespoke a stalled, manacled existence. View him back, front or in profile, there was no getting away from the absurd analogy. He filled—loosely—the chair of physics in the university down in the city three miles below The Oaks.

He was forty-four and a bachelor by instinct; one is tempted to say by heredity, for his father had succeeded in escaping matrimony until he was fifty-six. Simon Pfarre recognized in woman one all-predominant characteristic—acquisitiveness. He was always on guard against it with a sullen intensity out of all proportion to the real necessities of the situation. As a result, the gayest of Lotharios could have been no more preoccupied by woman's teasing image.

In conversation he had a way of slowly repeating the last phrase of a sentence before going on to the next, and this habit did not add to his general charm.

Cloelia's head again darted up from the hammock's ellipse, and she exchanged glances with Mrs. Conover as the man of science drew nearer and sought to slink past them along the winding path, his head bowed as if in profound thought; which detached attitude failed, however, to prevent a voice startlingly saccharine from calling out:

"Professor Pfarre, do come here a moment, please; I want your advice."

The man looked up, pretending to be startled, and really alarmed, but after a moment of instinctive hesitation he crossed the lawn in long strides that threatened the division of his being.

"Am I mistaken in assuming that someone addressed me?" he said, bowing smilelessly, begrudgingly, to both women.

"Someone did," caressed the voice of the widow, and a bare pretty forearm piled the pillows higher under a very blond head, while gray eyes strangely far apart, with black lashes, sought and clung to his furtive, nervous gaze.

"Sit down here, Professor Pfarre; I have to go to the house for something,"

said Mrs. Conover, rising, her face flushed from suppressed laughter, recognizing with a thrill Cloelia's plan of battle.

"Do nothing of the kind, madam; I cannot remain! I have much work to do before nightfall—before nightfall. My eyes, unfortunately, will not admit of the midnight oil, and so much precious time is lost to me—lost to me."

He averted his eyes from the hammock, after one quick glance at those brazen toe-tips impudently remaining unsheathed under his very nose. Surely modesty no longer existed on the earth; the hideous alternate was before his wounded vision in all his goings and comings; everywhere was a ghastly seductiveness, malignantly studied by these enemies of his own earnest striving sex, forever at war with woman and her pernicious ways. Joan wandered toward the house and Pfarre sank into her empty chair, the better to get at his handkerchief wherewith to wipe his brow and hands, damp from an excess of mixed emotions, the strongest of which was repulsion. Mrs. Poyet slid into a position where her eyes could more easily enjoy the curious spectacle before her. Many years of social spoiling had resulted in these present days of pathetic satiety, and this man's temperamental horror of her amused her as nothing else had done for a long time.

"You see, Dr. Pfarre—by the bye, should I say that or professor?"

With eyes on the juniper bush, he replied: "I took my degree of doctor of philosophy in Berlin, and had I remained over there—remained—er—over there—I should have continued the very proper and academic use of the ancient and honorable title of doctor. But one is subject here in this country to an unending series of misunderstandings—so I have altogether abandoned its usage, except when with my colleagues—among my colleagues, you comprehend."

"Ah, I see—but misunderstandings? May I ask?"

"Exactly, exactly! I was once aroused from my very essential sleep

no less than four times in one night at a Southern hotel, assuming that I held the degree of M.D. Most vexatious—most vexatious."

"And could you do nothing?" softly inquired Cloelia.

"Nothing? Oh, yes, I locked my door and gave most positive orders; but only after a very trying struggle each time was I able to reconquer sleep—to reconquer sleep—more absolutely necessary to a student than—"

"I meant the summons for help—it must have been an extreme case." Mrs. Poyet's voice was more restrained.

"It was poison—suicide—some woman—a sordid affair, I gathered the next morning at breakfast. Oxalic acid, I believe."

There was a moment's silence. Then in softest tones the widow asked:

"Is there an antidote?"

"Why, of course," he derided; "chalk, magnesia, plaster knocked from the wall, a lot of other things; but people always lose their heads—always lose their heads at such times."

"You were the only person there who, I dare say, had the faintest idea what should be done?" said she.

"So it appeared," he boasted.

"What became of her?"

"Oh, I believe she died, the waiter told me the next morning."

"Ah!" breathed Mrs. Poyet, shuddering with horror of the man, and then and there her purpose regarding him sank deeper shafts. His cold, brutal selfishness was capable, then, of going unbelievable lengths, once cross the introverted purposes of his life. She felt a sudden dart of fear, and it was with an effort that she again spoke to him.

"Pardon my detaining you. I hesitated naturally to ask Mrs. Conover; but you have lived here so many years your opinion would have great weight in deciding my summer plans. I like it here at The Oaks extremely, aside from being with my friend. I am thinking of giving up my North Cape trip and staying here indefinitely. How is this old house during the hot months? That's really my question."

"Stifling, absolutely stifling!" he burst out, scrambling hastily to his feet and snatching up his portfolio from the lawn.

She ran a white hand over her mouth, but her eyes blazoned her thought.

"But, professor, these old stone houses have such thick walls I should have thought——"

"You are altogether in error, Mrs. Poyet, altogether! The depth of the walls is more than discounted by the wretched—I say wretched—means of ventilation; windows so small and only opening at the bottom; and the—and no attic to shield the—er——"

"What a constitution you must have to have stood it all these years!" she exclaimed, apparently overcome by admiration of his vitality.

"I am, however, feeling it now, in an unwonted mental lassitude and a slight loss of ability to concentrate my mind upon my work," he avowed, turning away.

"You should not think of running further risk, professor; there is too much at stake. Thank you for warning me. I must reconsider it; however, the first summer perhaps I shall not feel it."

From that hour his perfect repose of mind was destroyed. When alone he chuckled mirthlessly at the thought of his instantaneous detection of her obvious purpose—this bold creature who had invaded his abiding-place, hitherto safeguarded through all these comfortable years from similar feminine approaches. No young unmarried woman or widow had ever stayed at The Oaks. It was not a retreat to appeal to youth and gaiety. Hence it followed that this Mrs. Poyet had ulterior motives. He must reinforce his defenses, be ever on the watch, give her no word of encouragement. Soon she would face failure and leave in despair, and the peaceful world would once more be his to command; the warmest corner in winter, the coolest in summer, the easiest chair by the best trimmed lamp, the choicest helpings at the table. Years of pitiless drilling had resulted in habitual solici-

tude for his welfare on the part of the gracious, stately little white-haired hostess, whose trembling hands served all things, whose shrewd old eyes watched all things. The sight of Miss Archibald's slavery to her unwelcome and dominating boarder furnished day by day fresh fuel for Cloelia's mounting hatred of the man.

Nothing could have more utterly amazed Pfarre than to have had his honesty impeached; and yet for five years he had largely filched his keep from Miss Hester's thin, worn, faithful, blue-veined hands, during those long years when pride had kept the Archibalds land-poor and Miss Hester "had a few friends with her for company."

The proud little woman was the oldest living member of a family that had had a brilliant past, and not one foot of the grand old place of her forefathers would she allow to be sold while life was in her.

When the trolley boldly dared pass by her gate it led to a long legal fight before that small slice was cut from her lawn. And she made them pay well for every tree, shrub and square foot of sod that was finally torn from her domain. She was seventy, and the loss of that lawsuit was the tragedy of her whole life. She never went to that end of the sweet old garden nor rode on the trolley line.

When Spark, her ancient white nag, was not lame Miss Hester drove; when Spark was lame she walked. It was not wise to speak to her about the lawsuit, for her usual dignity and repose left her and those blazing old eyes, the round spots of red on the thin cheeks, the quavering voice, made a pathetic picture of unquenchable human passion.

And yet, strong as was her will, as soon as Simon Pfarre had ceased to fear and suspect Miss Archibald's venerable intentions regarding him, after he had taken possession of her large front bedchamber, he at once proceeded to rule the whole household brutally, and had remained triumphant until Cloelia Poyet came one May day to visit her school friend, Joan Conover,

living with her three children at The Oaks during Lieutenant Conover's absence on a three years' cruise on the European station, whither the expense of her young family precluded even a thought of the wife's following.

Professor Pfarre was conscious that his presence had a strong psychic effect upon Mrs. Poyet; but his darting, suspicious little eyes misread the signs, and his life at The Oaks became a perfect purgatory of precaution.

One Sunday morning it turned suddenly very hot. Mrs. Poyet, watching from the veranda, saw the professor, with unheard-of courtesy, escort Miss Hester, attired in her black silk and black straw poke-bonnet, to the gate, where reposed Spark hitched to the ramshackle phaëton, which had a rotatory movement calculated to reduce troubles of the spleen and may have accounted for Miss Archibald's phenomenally good health. As she gathered up the sagging reins and jerked Spark into a preliminary wakefulness the professor said:

"I suppose Mrs. Poyet leaves us this week? Mrs. Conover will greatly miss her friend—greatly miss——"

"Why, no. Have you not heard? She has decided to remain all summer. Of course I am charmed to have her. I should have difficulty in even imagining a sprightlier and more welcome guest in my house. Shall I see you at service?"

"Not this morning," he replied, as he had every Sunday for five years. She listened with a sort of reproachful suavity, inclined her haughty little head, flopped the reins, and Spark threw her long-haired legs about recklessly for a moment, just to show that it was still easily within her power; and then she settled down into her regular going-to-church amble, about which she held conventions as rigid as some of Miss Hester's own.

Pfarre took the next car to the city with lips drawn to a line and eyes half-closed with rage and obstinate resolve.

"Now, as soon as Uncle Torm comes, we'll have church. I told him the first hot Sunday!" cried Joan, flying about

under the trees, placing chairs and stools. Cloelia appeared tugging at an old inlaid Sheraton card-table, much the worse for wear; Joan ran toward her and together they carried it out under the trees, and presently there was placed upon its faded green felt a zither.

Then Joan lifted up her voice and chanted:

"Chil-dren! Come! Ding-dong! The bell is ringing. Roy, Con, Patty! Ah, Cloelia, the deafness of human ears on a Sabbath morn! Of course they want us to hunt for them, the little scalawags!"

"They'll come fast enough as soon as they hear Uncle Torm," replied Cloelia—pronouncing the name as they all did, Maryland fashion—and so it proved. No sooner was there heard coming from the direction of the barn a shrill whistle than out of the house poured the recalcitrant congregation, two boys and a wee fluff of a girl in white, and they disappeared behind the house with unsabbatical shouts.

The two women laughed and sat waiting under the trees. They were both in white, both blond, both tall, but one was a beautiful woman and one was not; and after awhile one saw that the difference lay somewhat in the two souls.

The beautiful young mother had a girl's face, happy-eyed, fresh as the morning, the whole countenance bubbling over with the great joy of being alive and well on a sunny May day. Mrs. Poyet's eyes had been married years ago to disillusion, and cynicism flirted with the corners of her large, flexible mouth—unrest and bitterness brooded everywhere in a strangely attractive, colorless face. Both faces were turned in expectation toward the corner of the graystone, ivy-covered house. Both were stanch friends, each knowing more of the other's life than either guessed; and in each case the knowledge but served to deepen their mutual tenderness. Cloelia's soul had not yet quite reacted from that most corroding of all disappointments—the sordid tragedy of a slowly

disintegrated love for the man she married; a naval officer whom she had followed all over the world, having no children and a fortune of her own. It was through this marriage that Joan had met Lieutenant Conover; when, two years after Cloelia had graduated from their school, Joan—several years younger and in a lower grade—had also gone through that picturesque but inutile function. Joan held pathetic memories of a year of happy letters from her friend from the European station; letters full of poetic enthusiasm, high ideals, the wholesomeness of a satisfied heart. Then followed a year of letters from Hong Kong, Shanghai, Kobe and Yokohama, no longer poetic but gay with satire, witty with dubious antitheses and the merrily sad wisdom of much observation that only flies before the greater wisdom of more observation. Following that was Lieutenant-Commander Poyet's sudden illness and death at the Yokohama Naval Hospital. Then came several years of silence between the friends; and then a note from New York asking if Miss Hester had a vacant corner. Joan's loving heart yearned in silence over the great change in her friend, and she humored all her fantasies however grotesque, however exacting.

On the other side of the gold coin of their friendship Mrs. Poyet saw all around Joan's life; and she, too, found it pathetic in its limitations, its unconsciousness of much outside her tiny horizon, combined with the entire sacrifice of the great social promise of her girlhood to her early marriage to an ensign in the Navy. And here at The Oaks a small income and the growing family always kept her during his cruises, moored in still waters among the reeds. Even when he returned and was stationed on shore, the inherent selfishness of his temperament gave her but further chances for that passionate sacrifice of self that was the keynote of her bountiful nature.

In the symphony of womanhood she had but played over and over again

the largo of motherhood; for her psychical attitude toward even her handsome light-hearted husband was largely maternal. Her exceptional beauty, her talent for and intense love of music, her natural grace, charm and social tact were thrown completely away upon a husband who, when he was with her, gulped with a laugh where he should have sipped with a prayer of gratitude.

Thus far had Cloelia's thoughts roamed when "Torm" Archibald's deep guttural voice preceded him around the corner of the house; and presently he appeared, the children shackling his long legs and arms—a tall man bent with farm work; a kind, keen, laughing face, deeply lined; a certain well-bred awkwardness in every motion; a bachelor with the soul of a father, a man of forty with the heart of a child; a merry creature who lived from hour to hour, and if he had ever had his hour of strong emotion, no one ever knew of it. He lived across the meadows at Mistress Clarice Pattison's place, called Cedarhurst, unfortunately, because, of the evergreen family, only pines would thrive in the immediate vicinity of the house.

"I vow, Roy, if you don't let go of my right leg I'll turn from the popular deacon of our Cathedral of Saint Oak to the coroner thereof—and I'll bury you deep, sirree! Good morning, ladies! You see me encumbered with family cares. Pardon my hat; I'm armless, as you perceive. Ah, Joan, Joan, my girl, what a day to be alive in! The air is our *jubilante Deo*, the light our *benedictus*, the flowers our incense, the thrushes and larks our choristers. Are we not right, Mrs. Poyet, to have our church out of doors today? Or does it shock you as it does Sister Hester? Wait, anyhow, till you see."

A quiet command from the mother had loosened Mr. Archibald's fetters, and he shook hands with Mrs. Poyet and kissed Joan's fair brow. His still boyish eyes dwelt a moment upon her exquisite face, and Cloelia inwardly

thanked goodness that someone at least appreciated Joan's rare loveliness, hidden away from a great world always a-hunger for beauty and as ready as ever the Greeks were to deify it.

"Will the congregation kindly wait till I wind the clocks?" remarked Uncle Tom, as he lounged over to the house in which he was born, and to which he had come every Sunday morning for over twenty years—except when at college—to wind Sister Hester's six clocks. For by ancient tradition all of the Archibald women were forbidden to touch any mechanical contrivance whatever, however shrewd they might prove themselves in other practical matters.

Joan tuned the zither, her head bent low and sideways; the boys' faces were together whispering, and Cloelia watched and wondered if, after all, her friend had not at once grasped the sweet kernel of living, without the weary winnowing from the chaff.

Suddenly little Patty slid from her chair and flew into the house, returning with something very precious shut within her chubby fist—a secret she refused to share even with her brothers. And then Mr. Archibald returned, calling out as he advanced:

"Did I ever tell you the clock story, Mrs. Poyet? Sure? I'm beginning to strike too often myself, and I have to keep a guard on my tongue. Well, Sister Hester has the oldest of many old clocks in the family, on the library mantelpiece. For two hundred and sixty years it did its work soberly, honorably, with only now and then a dignified ailment, soon cured. Its record has been handed down through generations of Archibalds. Seventeen years ago, suddenly one Sunday morning while I was winding it, it went mad! Gad! I was fairly afraid of the thing. It seemed alive and in sudden rebellion against the changes it had lived through, perhaps longing for the old peaceful days, as Sister Hester is, before the trolley came. It was two o'clock when I wound it; and first it

struck fifty-eight times! I sent Rube over at once with a note to Sister Clarice saying I should not think of returning until the emotional turn was over. I spent the afternoon in the library in grandfather's chair, watching. At three o'clock it struck one hundred and forty times!"

"Mr. Archibald!"

"Ask Sister Hester! At four it struck twenty; at five it struck thirty-one furiously, and before I could get to it, off the mantelpiece she went!"

"You fell asleep in grandfather's chair!" expostulated Cloelia.

"I'll go before a notary and pay for the seal myself, any day you name. But the real marvel of the story is that after only a week's doctoring—during which I seldom left the library, such was my concern—it's back in its place and jogging peacefully on, as it did when Louis the Thirteenth was giving all the trouble he could in France, and Cromwell in England. Boys, do you realize that? Poor old thing, no wonder it became *aliénée* and had to be treated. Only, mark you, fair ladies, having discovered it to be a female clock I've wired her to the wall safe and sound—wouldn't trust her a moment without."

When the laugh was over there was a short pause and all eyes turned upon Joan. Her light brown hair, hiding gold in the ripples, was parted in the middle and bound low at the back, framing a smooth, broad brow. The proportions of the whole face were faultless, the coloring exquisite, from the dark blue eyes to the red, clearly defined lips. Her full figure, dressed in the simplest of white dimities, ran around the corner of pretty curves wherever one's eye lighted and followed the lines. But, after all, it was the woman's grandeur of soul looking through her eyes, her infinite tenderness hovering about the pure and yet passionate mouth, that set her face apart in one's memory.

Without a trace of self-consciousness she played a few strong arpeggio major chords on her simple little

zither, and then with eyes lifted to the swaying tree-tops she sang:

"Ye days of cloudless beauty,
Hoar frost and summer glow;
Ye groves that wave in spring,
And glorious forests, sing
Alleluia!"

At the last word Uncle Tom's deep bass rumbled out and the high, thin piping of the boys. Patty, ever left behind, finished in a shrill solo, the mother waiting for her each time before going on:

"Wherefore we sing, both heart and voice
awaking,

Alleluia,
And children's voices echo answer making,
Alleluia!"

And long after the others came Patty's little "Alle-loo-lal!"

There was a lump in Cloelia's throat, and she wondered if her own life had not been the narrow one and her friend's in no need of her pity.

Selected here and there from the beautiful old service, the little ceremony went on under the great oaks. And when the amens came about Patty was now far in advance, and Uncle Tom's rumbling voice was flecked with the child's shrill amens thrown in at random. But no one chided her, and so no cloud came to the sweet baby eyes, so like her mother's. Then Joan sang, till the birds listened frozen with jealousy, the "Anima Mea"; and then they sang together, birds and all, two simple hymns, and the service was over.

With a sudden change of manner, Joan then said:

"Now for the best and most beautiful thing we've seen, or heard, or learned, since last Sunday. Shall I begin by a lovely new song I've learned for you?"

"And now my baby!" cried Joan, when she had finished.

Patty slid from her chair and slowly opened her little perspiring fist—which she had kept fast closed from first to last—one finger at a time, peering closely the while. When the tiny pink hand lay open before them she gave a cry of dismay at finding only a pale blue smudge where once

was a tiny butterfly treasured by wee fingers unconscious of harm.

The little face fell, a storm was brewing, but her mother drew the child quickly toward her and said:

"You did your best, dear, didn't you? That's all any of us can do. I'll show you what to do next time. It was a beautiful blue, like a bit of the sky; look, sweetheart! look, boys! isn't it wonderful? And now Uncle Tom will say the benediction, and church will be over."

The strange little group stood with bowed heads while the man repeated the stately sentence of dismissal.

Without a word Cloelia left them and went into the house; the children fled back to their play, and Archibald said gently:

"She is not happy, your friend."

The great glow of joy in Joan's eyes clouded for an instant, and she sighed:

"It must be horrible to be unhappy. I have such a terror of unhappiness I have been—I am so happy, so happy!"

"Happiness is about two-thirds subjective, seems to me. Only one little third is environment. I know wives in the Navy situated as you are, Joan, who fairly radiate discontent and discord."

The woman smiled incredulously.

"Oh, no, Uncle Tom, not as I am! With Rush's love always about me like sunshine? And with my children? With you and all my other friends? Ah, no, you have not looked long enough. No woman could be unhappy."

He smiled down tenderly at the simple, almost shabby dress, the fair fingers roughened with needle pricks, and he held his peace.

II

THE next morning the widow began her active campaign against the professor. Already he was beginning to show the effects of her determined presence upon the battlefield, in an even more oblique contact with humanity than was his wont. His alert eyes

inventoried, upon the threshold, the occupants of a room, and if Mrs. Poyet was within he withdrew. He came irregularly to his meals—long before or long after the others. From the day that Cloelia had spoken to him on the lawn—where half their lives were spent in front or on the south side, according to wind and shadows—Pfarre had invariably continued in the trolley until it reached the "lane" gate, so-called, which led to the barn. Here he alighted, and by a circuitous route around the back of the house reached his room in safety, filled with a dull rage at the indignity forced upon him. His whole home life was now envenomed by his imaginary fight against the aggressions of Cloelia Poyet. That she was bent upon his capture he felt in every tormented fibre, and in the resolve that she should fail he closed his jaws down as a bulldog does, prepared to die before loosening them. The result was a condition of mind hovering disconcertingly between fascinated repulsion and downright malevolence. She watched him through heavy white lids lowered over laughing eyes.

When she found that he was adapting his ways of living to the fact of her presence she roused herself, and it was noticed that she and Mr. Archibald held apart long consultations attended by much laughter; thereby winning abuse from a pouting Joan, who reminded her friend of her expressed theories as to silence in large undertakings. Whereupon Cloelia remarked: "Oh, Uncle Torm is such a scaramouch he doesn't count." Joan secretly rejoiced meanwhile that the first silent indifference of her friend was giving way to that something wholesome and sane in the very air at The Oaks.

So when Professor Pfarre that Monday afternoon descended from the car, and was stealthily making his way with bowed head down the narrow lane, and then came face to face with a smiling widow laden picturesquely with great sprays of shad-blow, he suddenly realized that even a profound knowledge of the world's cosmos avails but little

against the Protean attacks of a petticoated Satan.

A thief caught in the night bending over a jewel-case would have presented much the same spectacle as Simon Pfarre at that moment, and only the halo of tiny white blossoms half-hiding Cloelia's irregular but charming face made it possible for her to go on. From afar a gaunt figure watched gleefully from the hayloft of the old barn, with explosions of husky laughter.

"Oh, is that you?" cried Mrs. Poyet, apparently a prey to delighted surprise and embarrassment.

"I am—there is an extremely rare form of fungus that I—I have discovered by the barn, and I have been watching its slow—its slow—" the wretched man stammered on.

"I was just thinking of you," cooed Cloelia. There was not an emotion in him that was not combative, negative, recusant; and she who had fed on approbation most of her life found the novelty of it stimulating, and welcomed gladly even that sensation after several years of emotional deadness, when life had gone on only because it was an endless cable of habits linked hour within hour.

She met his furtive glance with a deep look of clinging admiration that froze the blood in his veins; she sighed polysyllabically; she bit a blossom near her lips caressingly. His haunted little eyes flew about from sky to tree-tops, to hedge, to the dandelions at their feet, and then back again.

"I am going to stay, professor; have you heard? Indefinitely—I do not know exactly why, but I—I am so happy here!" she burst out impulsively. Not one word said he. After her trumps were exhausted his long suit would tell. But she knew the game, too, and paused, beaming upon him. Literally for his fireside he must strike.

"I—er—regret to learn this, as I shall not be here this summer."

"Oh, Professor Pfarre! Why do you go? I—" she stammered, turned away, and to his horror her voice broke. After one miserable glance at her drooping, graceful figure, he fled without a

word, feeling the spiked embrace of "La Vierge" slowly closing in upon him, impaling, stifling, torturing—relentless! No need in these days of morbid sensibility for the underground dungeon, the chains, the horrid creak of devilish mechanisms!

He sent word to Miss Hester that he should dine in town that night, and back he went down into the sweltering heat, and The Oaks seemed like heaven itself barred against him as he closed the old gate and stood waiting for the clanging, glaring car.

After a judicious wait in the lane, Cloelia sped with lowered head down to the barn, and Uncle Tom shouted a welcome to her, and slid boyishly down the ladder, and they sat upon a bale of hay and made merry together; and Cloelia wondered to hear herself laughing once more, laughing genuinely till the tears came.

A few evenings later, when Pfarre's acutest suspicions were lulled, it so happened that there was held in the vestry of the tiny church a fair, when the yearly heartbreaking effort was made to collect enough money to defray current expenses; the ambition to pay off the first debt having long since died out in the community, after it had been foisted comfortably upon the bishop's weary shoulders.

All at The Oaks made ready to go save little Patty, who was sound asleep, and the professor. Archibald called for them in Sister Clarice's *char-à-banc*, that lady herself being occupied with an "absent treatment" for neuritis. At the moment she was lying with closed eyes and six wax candles, under yellow shades, burning brightly around her. Sister Clarice had an abundance of money and leisure, no children and a preoccupying set of nerves, and her experiments with the ramifications of modern pseudoscience filled her life delightfully, and may have been accountable for her brother Tom's abnormal sense of humor.

After the great hullabaloo of the start was over, and the professor felt convinced that he had the place to

himself, he opened his door—from recent habit, gently—and stole forth. For the first time since the invasion of the crafty widow he felt in command of his rightful kingdom. It was too hot to study—he never read—so dragging a low chair after him from the porch he sought his accustomed place out on the lawn by the mock-orange bushes, away from the trees, where the south wind whispered all summer long its evening falsehood about the morrow.

He loosened his collar and unbuttoned his white waistcoat, pushed up his cuffs, ran a nervous hand through his thick hair and faced the breeze with a deep sigh of contentment.

No, it would take more than an impudent, designing young woman to rout him out of this nest, fashioned to his liking. Perhaps he should be compelled to go for a few short weeks, just to put her off the scent; and then after she left he had but to double on his tracks, and beyond that surely even her pride would protest. And the soothing thought put him to sleep.

He awoke with a jerk to find seated on a low stool beside him a figure in white, which, as he started erect, broke into that low, caressing laugh he had learned so dearly to hate. He sat mechanically buttoning his waistcoat and his mind against her, his hands trembling violently.

"I came back," she murmured.

"I—I see."

"Shall I tell you why, or only a fib?" she coaxed in a tone that made him writhe.

"It is obviously—obviously no affair of mine," grunted the distracted man of science.

"Oh, but it is!" caroled the lady.

Heavenly powers! was he to be compelled to fly, or to sit there helpless because the creature wore petticoats? No, he'd hold his ground and have it out with her once for all, frankly, brutally. Shrinking from her as far as possible, even his feet drawn under his chair, he sat ready for the fight, facing straight in front of him. There was something in his attitude that suddenly revealed to her the fact that at

the root distrust of himself was stronger in him than distrust of her, and from that moment she knew convincingly that victory would in the end be hers.

"Professor, has one a right to be happy in this life? Not privilege—I mean right. You who know so much, surely you can help me. One instinctively seeks analogy from nature in these human problems, nature who has remained nearer the mandates of Genesis: 'Let there be light, and there was light.' Am I not right, professor?" The immodesty of her cossetting tone was all that he assimilated of what she said, and his jaws were rigid.

"Nature, you see, created the foolishness of flowers, as well as edible vegetables; and she need not, you know. Nature, you will admit, is on the side of happiness—the darling old, extravagant, wasteful thing! If she hadn't that blessed streak of nonsense in her the sun would have tumbled headlong to rest without all those evening fireworks in the west. When you think of it, it's man who has poked about and made things useful; nature just makes them beautiful and trusts to luck. Don't you think so?"

What was the woman aiming at? In his heart he felt like arising and striking her; in reality the brute in him said:

"I never discuss serious matters with women."

After a gasp she went on sweetly, her words fairly nestling against him and turning him sick with despair.

"Ah, I quite understand. We are too emotional, too much the creatures of our senses. We have only love's intuitions, love's courage, love's patience to wait—and hope."

He wiped his face and hands and wished he was dead.

"You—women talk a great deal—talk a great deal of nonsense, first and last. Science sees only usefulness in beauty—you can't separate them," he said in a strained voice.

Cynthia laughed, shivering a little at his brutalities, and then pressed on:

"We women don't mind being called nonsensical, because after all aren't all the things in life that are at all worth while—that? Music, poetry, art—everything, once assured of bread, clothing and shelter. The soul took the form of a butterfly, not a bee." There was a pause; she leaned toward him and murmured:

"What a beautiful night! And the honeysuckle—do you catch it? As you do not smoke you still have the feminine susceptibility to odors."

What business was it of hers that he had had catarrh for twenty years—the hussy! He watched her fearsomely, safe in the half-light. A determined woman near to him, in some soft, thin, white stuff that clung to her in a devilish way; silence, isolation, moonlight—he slowly drew his feet out from under his chair, that he might the more easily gain the use of them in an emergency.

It was high time, for he felt rather than saw her arise and with apparent impulse drag her stool a foot or two nearer, and, with an abandon that made him gasp, she said:

"Confess now, professor, that a woman who isn't a little foolish—just a little—is a sort of ethical cripple." He had never fought the battles of the salon, he had not advanced much beyond the stone age socially, and Cloelia felt there was small need of any conversational ballistics, when she heard his return fire:

"I have never had occasion to give the whole subject—the whole subject a moment's thought."

"Ah, that's just it! That's just why I stayed at home tonight; just why I have been saying all this 'nonsense' to you. For I see—I feel so keenly—that you have put happiness, woman, pleasure, nature, out of your life—and may I say something very, very personal? I know—I know absolutely as a woman does—that you are terribly, terribly lonely!"

No pity for him entered the young woman's heart, crowded full of pictures of his brutal selfishness, his sly theft of privilege, his greed, his long

getting for little much from frail, courteous old hands. Miss Hester would never give expression to her gratitude if relieved of the incubus, but Brother Tom vouched for it, and a marvel of a man, called Admiral Sproull, would at once, it appeared, take the vacated room. So Cloelia sighed, turned away her head, wiped from her eyes imaginary tears, enjoying her little theatricals hugely, but longing for Tom Archibald's applauding eyes. And so it came to pass that she was not aware that Pfarre had slowly dragged himself to his feet and had taken a step toward her, looking down at her bowed head, with clenched hands, trembling violently, hypnotized by hate, despair and a something that was far from being so gentle a thing as love, but had the lure of all things forbidden and barred. He looked about furtively, took one step nearer to her, begrudged by every atom of his morbid being; he moistened his lips to speak, but his breath came in gasps. She sat instantly erect at the sound so unexpectedly near to her, and, looking up into his face, sprang to her feet, cowering away from him.

With a groan he fled to the house. The ousting of the Ph.D. was assured, but Cloelia's laugh had gone, and as she walked up and down her room within locked doors she whispered to herself:

"Why am I fated to see the worst—always the very worst?—I, who only long for the pretty, polished, smiling surface of life!"

All that night like a thief Simon Pfarre crept about the house, silently gathering his belongings together, while the household above him slept.

By four he was packed. By half-past five he had seen the old colored cook, who hated him, had his last cup of her perfect coffee and left a note for Miss Archibald telling her he was hurriedly called away to Baltimore to remain indefinitely and leaving directions for the forwarding of his trunks. By a quarter-past six he slipped past the mock-orange bushes and took the

first down-going trolley from the lane gate.

The Ph.D. was evicted, but Uncle Tom was disappointed in Mrs. Poyet's reserved account of the last act of their comedy.

After Miss Hester had recovered from her bewildered astonishment and self-accusations for imaginary neglect of her old guest, her brother insinuated the subject of Admiral Sproull.

In a few days one of Miss Hester's dainty, old-fashioned notes on cream, satin-finished paper found its way to the retired officer's hands. Smiling, he read:

Rear-Admiral Philip Sproull, U. S. Navy.

DEAR SIR: Bearing in mind your oft-repeated desire to become a member of my household, I beg a moment of your valuable time to inform you that, through fortuitous and altogether unexpected circumstances, the opportunity presents itself to offer you my largest first-floor bedchamber—the one where your father used so often kindly to come and read to my poor father during his last painful years of life. My only other guests at present are Mrs. Conover, wife of my nephew Rush, and her three well-conducted children; and, temporarily, a friend of hers, widow of a naval officer. A very harmonious group of young people I feel assured you will find them. I feared this summer my waning strength would prohibit me from the pleasure of entertaining guests, but Providence has ordered otherwise out of His bounty. Hoping that we may soon have the distinguished pleasure of seeing you, I beg, with kind regards, to subscribe myself

Most cordially yours,

HESTER FIELDING ARCHIBALD.

THE OAKS.

"Lord love the sweet old thing!" the admiral exclaimed aloud, getting up from his particular armchair at the open club window. There was only about six years' difference between their ages in his favor, but he took a man's base advantage in such matters.

Philip Sproull had been the beauty man of his class at the Academy, and had cheerfully graduated at the foot, in all but social prowess. That fact being true, it was difficult to understand his unfortunate marriage, which had left him, at sixty-four, childless, stranded, utterly homeless in the world save for his club; "just one of the Navy's professional pallbearers for the rest of my

life," as he put it. He had had two years of it and much standing bare-headed with other retired officers under hot suns or chilly rains, during which period he besought Miss Hester to take pity upon him and furnish him the excuse of non-residence in the Capital.

As long as breath was in his body it would remain a very handsome one—tall, spare, broad-shouldered, with almost his cadet waist measure; a face clean-shaven; keen, dark eyes, a little sad from much seeing; a decidedly haughty face, belied by a mouth which when it smiled gave away the whole gentle secret of his character.

He lost no time—with plenty to throw away gratefully—in replying in person to Miss Hester's note. Cloelia was beside their hostess under the trees when the retired admiral presented himself, and so delightedly overheard the whole conversation between the two. She rejoiced at their old-fashioned elaborated courtesies, which left nothing unexpressed, their mutual ignoring of all reference to the question of remuneration. He was to be the honored friend and guest of an extremely pleased hostess, joining her house party for the summer. At the end of each month he would find a beautifully written bill upon his chiffonier. He would pay it by cheque, left in the drawing-room upon her wonderful old "Kettle" desk mounted in brass with a "secret place" about which the children whispered, but for which they dared not search.

And so no word passed between them on the disturbing subject of money, but soon after the instalment of Admiral Sproull in the place of a certain man of learning the level of living at The Oaks was raised. His fees were liberal, he kept his horses and a carriage as a self-respecting sailor must when he "strikes the beach" to stay. His coachman was his old colored steward, who resigned from the Navy upon the admiral's retirement, and having been a jockey in his youth, fell upon his feet when he went to the Army and Navy Club and began wheedling his old commanding officer

to find him something to do that would attach him to the service of the beloved person. To complete a picturesque *entourage* the admiral's body-servant was Yunosuke, a Japanese student who read Dante obliquely as he blacked "dannasan's" many pairs of boots of a morning out on the well-house steps.

So an altogether glorious regime began at The Oaks. The little hostess gave orders that her three Sheffield trays with the grapevine border should be used every day now, instead of only on Sunday. Also her George III silver teapot; and but for the fact that Serafina the maid threatened to leave, Miss Hester would have used her Crown Derby plates every Sunday night at supper! No intelligent servant would have such responsibilities thrust upon her needlessly, with a quondam naval steward waiting for her down by the ice-house while she hurriedly washed up the supper things.

Miss Hester sought to atone for the eclipse of the Crown Derby by wearing at dinner her cap of Cluny lace with faded violet ribbons. All of this almost feverish display was in response to that something in the handsome, courtly admiral which somehow demanded one's best. Mrs. Poyet laughingly wore her hitherto unpacked prettiest gowns and tucked roses in Joan's hair and belt, and dinner became quite a festivity, with the cause of it all in immaculate dinner clothes, a flower in his button-hole, Yunosuke behind his chair in silken native dress, silently anticipating the many wants of the old naval autocrat. The entire household soon frankly adored him, from Miss Archibald to Patty; just as his squadron had in the days of his command, from his gray-haired chief-of-staff down to the youngest jack-of-the-dust whose shy salutation he punctiliously returned.

Nothing seems to draw two people more quickly together than the discussion of a third person, even if not in terms of belittlement,

The admiral took his place at once in Joan's heart through long sympathetic talks about Cloelia Poyet, whose over-developed, disillusioned nature he seemed at once to comprehend.

Then the two young women would foregather and dissect the admiral after he had left every afternoon, bound for his club, at two o'clock, with pathetic regularity.

Cloelia one day declared: "What's the sense of mincing matters? We're all in love with him, down to Patty, who refuses to wear any but her biggest butterfly bows on her topknot. Well, he's a sort of dethroned king, after all, as all retired admirals are—little kings for awhile, circled with their elaborate court etiquette, their glittering staff of officers, their special flags flying to let other fleets know that they are 'in residence,' their solitary barges, their supreme power over thousands, subject much more to their will than in many a constitutional monarchy. Yes, and hail-fellow-well-met with their crowned peers. Oh, you ask Admiral Sproull! I don't believe there's a ruler in Europe, nor many in Asia, with whom he has not broken bread and sipped that liquid diplomacy—champagne!"

Then Joan protested: "Perhaps that may be why we all do dress up for him, I'll admit, Cloelia, but that's not why we love him. It's the perfection of his breeding, the absolute harmony between his acts and his words and the great, loving heart of the dear old man under it all!"

Then Cloelia sniffed: "It's high time Rush Conover came home!" and so it ended always in a laugh.

The third conversational combination was between Cloelia and Sproull, striving to outdo each other in their admiration for Joan the Beautiful. The division came when the admiral flatly refused to pity Joan, to see aught but cause for rejoicing in her small horizon.

"But women like that belong to the world, admiral! the poor dreary old beauty-loving world, always hungry

for an *édition de luxe* of womanhood. It's a ghastly waste."

"Confound the world, madam—if you'll pardon an old fellow's vehemence! Satiety, not hunger, is the matter with the heartless, thankless jade. I know you young people do not read Pope, but with your permission I'll quote him at you ne'ertheless:

"How happy is the blameless Vestal's lot!
The world forgetting, by the world forgot."

"And he also says," cried Mrs. Poyet quickly:

"The mouse that always trusts to one poor
hole
Can never be a mouse of any soul!"

The admiral arose and bowed low before her; then, reseating himself leisurely in his Hong Kong bamboo chair—always placed by Yunosuke, on fair days, out on the lawn beside Joan's work-table and Cloelia's hammock—he continued:

"The 'ghastly waste' you spoke of a moment ago, my Lady Poyet, would only come if our beautiful Mrs. Conover *did* go out into the world a prey to jaded eyes and ears and tongues touched with the poison of seduction. Women would not believe in the child's innocence; men would worship it and at the same time seek to destroy it. Only bored when they succeed—but this is no manner of talk with a sprig of a girl like you! A thousand pardons, my lady." He had called her so from the first.

"Ah, admiral, your lady is a thousand years old. One lives a score of years in one sometimes," sighed she.

"Poor lady!" he said gently, leaning over and patting her hand dangling over the hammock's brim. "I know, I know! but, my dear child, one's sense of proportion comes very late in life. One only gets hold of a good recipe for living somewhere about forty; so much judgment for so much enthusiasm, one spoonful of exactions to two of forgiveness and a pinch of folly thrown in."

"It'll come earlier to me," said Mrs. Poyet grimly, and he chuckled:

"Perhaps, but I doubt it—you're too apt to forget the forgiveness and the enthusiasm and the humor of it all, I fear. *Ride si sapis* has been my motto for thirty years. But I'm told it's very bad taste to throw a bit of Latin or French nowadays into one's conversation. I must stop it. It's the age when it's the sign of blood and breeding to put one's worst foot forward—hobnailed and without polish! I am not yet convinced that your generation is an improvement on mine, madam," laughed he.

"Since I've met you, sir, I have abandoned the argument!" quoth she.

"Lorelei, bent upon wrecking an old craft on its last voyage!" he exclaimed, shaking a finger at her. She felt, while she was with him, as if she had stepped out of a Lancet and was chatting in the sunshine, bepowdered and bepatched, décolleté, in pink brocade, a spaniel and a peacock near. It was always a shock to open her sleepy eyes and find starched cuffs instead of lace ruffles at the admiral's wrists. She liked these talks amazingly well, and Tom Archibald sulked at Cedarhurst for a whole week after the invasion of the conquering Navy. And by the time she had placated his vanity and made the two men heartily renew an old liking, the ugly little bare spot in her own heart was beginning to be covered with tender green things that wound in and out and whispered of a blossoming time.

One day Joan received a letter from her husband written in Venice, part of which she read to Mrs. Poyet. They were sitting together in the library, a shower having driven them indoors.

"Isn't he a perfect dear, Cloelia? Listen to this:

"I am sending my best girl a little present I picked up in Malta a few weeks ago. It was a bargain, so don't fret yourself—nor scold me. Is five yards enough to do anything with? The woman in the shop told me it was what was left over of an order from an Italian princess. I'm sending it over to you by our navigator, Gus Trenly (great chum of mine). His time is up, and he's ordered home. Leaves on the next steamer from Genoa. He's a pretty gay sort of chap in a gentlemanly way—not

your style of man in the least, except that he's fond of the same sort of funeral music that you are. However, I'd like you to be nice to him; but for pity's sake don't let Aunt Hester ask him to dinner, and don't let the children crawl all over him. He's not that kind of a man. Love to the shavers, and my compliments to the disdainful Poyet. Only ten months more and then we'll break out our homebound pennant and steer straight for Sandy Hook and—you. By the bye, the captain's wife is in Nice. She's what the boys call a stunner, and lively isn't the word. I'm one of her pets, and you ought to see me fetch and carry for her ladyship. Of course, it's just a little policy game on my part."

There was a short pause before either again spoke, and then Joan said softly, stooping lower over her endless sewing:

"I wonder if she's dark or light?"

Cloelia stared at her a moment, wondering, and then she laughed, exclaiming:

"Jealous, by all the powers!"

Joan looked up, flushed and conscious, her sweet eyes full of tears, and nodded assent.

"I'm jealous of every woman he writes about in all of his letters the whole three years of his cruise; even married women—did you ever hear of such foolishness?"

"Once or twice," said Cloelia, her cynical eyes resting upon her friend. "Many couples are only married when they are together, my dear; and few married women consent to being considered altogether innocuous!"

Joan burst out passionately: "Don't say such things to me, Cloelia! It shrivels me like a frost. I cannot stand it, with Rush there, and with me tied here hand and foot!"

"Silly, silly Joan! You, jealous of anything feminine alive! The prettiest thing in the world today! Why, Joan, if you had been set in the right country and the right century nations would have gone to war about you, painters crossed swords to get you on their maligning canvases, and as to lovers—my dear, they would have been raked away in the early morning from under your windows like dead leaves."

"Cloelia Poyet!" laughed Joan, responding like a child to a little help over a rocky place.

The widow swept on: "But no, you must needs pick out a stupid century, given up—soul and body—to the pursuit of speed; and you must needs marry before you're eighteen an ensign with a golden smile and a copper income!"

"Rush is the best husband in the world," cried his loyal mate.

"Of course, of course! I've met 'the best husband in the world' by the hundred! I know him. All the same he spikes you down here with three little screws: Roy, and Con, and Patty; and then off he sails, free as the wind, and—and buys Maltese lace in the land of its birth, fresh from a princess's excess. The difference!"

"He sends it to me."

"Contented little 'me'! Oh, I'd have you at the very least a duchess, and rule Britain with a smile, instead of sitting here throwing your smiles away on Roy's pajamas! It makes me wild! Joan Conover, shall I tell you the visions I have of you? Listen. I'd have you the chatelaine of some grand old castle in England. Warwick! that's the setting for you. That great low-ceilinged room looking down toward the bonnie Avon, resplendent with those world-famous Van Dycks and old Guy's armor. You know the room I mean? Pardon me, dearest heart, I forgot you were not with me that day; you always are in spirit, and sometimes I forget. There is where I see you in creamy white velvet, standing with the light falling on those shoulders and arms fit to turn a marble Venus into *verde antique* with envy. There's a deep fall of—let me see—grounded Venetian point—so few can wear it—and opals and diamonds just caked all over your breast and hair; and standing all about you are princes, and poets, and painters, and statesmen, and the women in the corners are pale under their rouge, cold and sick with jealousy, and yet they—"

"Leather and prunello!" cried a deep voice behind them.

"Admiral!" cried both women in

consternation, Cloelia blushing guiltily as his dark eyes met hers in reproach, and knowing she would catch a mental drubbing before she slept that night. To whisper the faintest word of discontent in the ear of the happy young mother at The Oaks she knew the admiral held to be no less a thing than criminal.

"In the first place, I have found that women fairly revel in each other's beauty, and hold it very much more highly than ever we men do—witness your own ravings, Mrs. Poyet! Take an old man's word for it, Mistress Joan Conover, after everything is said, and seen, and heard, and tasted, and done—the good-night kiss of sleepy little Patty lying in your arms is worth it all a hundredfold. Pay no heed whatever to this Calypso here, singing men and women to their ruin!"

Then he left them abruptly, and presently Cloelia arose in silence, and taking an umbrella she wandered forth, and opening the gate walked down the road in the rain, now reduced to a fitful sprinkle.

When left alone Joan dropped her work and sat perfectly still by the window, looking out at the dripping trees and shrubs, and she dreamed dreams of greatness as did another Joan moving on toward her fate.

Ah! to be perfectly dressed from head to foot all at once, sure of herself all around—just once! Not as it always had been with her—the shoes a little worn just when she had been able to buy fresh gloves, and they fresher than her veil; a new gown achieved just as the hat was out of date; a short skirt when all the world wore long; large sleeves just as the fashion changed. She had always laughed at the absurdity of it until today. How she had all her life long loved lace—"devil's cobwebs"—someone had called it once in her hearing. And sable to nestle her chin into—the splendid "feel of the thing"! Once in a shop she had tried on a boa, and she smelt the lordly odor of the sable yet. The happiness that had never come to her of looking as Cloelia said; and

then glancing over the heads of the princes, and poets, and statesmen, and seeing Rush standing in the doorway, the dear, handsome, pleasure-loving face; the strong, sinewy figure all in the braveries of uniform—and she would laugh and sweep them all aside and hold out her arms and run to him, in the old way. She smiled and flushed at the very thought of how he would tease, and deride, and burlesque his admiration—and so somehow belittle it—as he always did. Then she arose and wandered to the open door and stood leaning, with eyes on the golden horizon, the rain at an end. The cool freshness passed over her brow like a mother's hand, and her vision changed. No, it was not her body that needed richer raiment; she could go contentedly to the end dressed in the shabby compromise between her ideal and her purse; it was her soul that longed for the "purple and fine linen" of music and art. Towering always above every other desire was this young woman's longing to hear the world's great music, for she had never but once heard any in all her life. When home Rush liked the theatre, and there was not money for both. The real poison left in Joan's fancy that afternoon by Mrs. Poyet's fairy tale lay in that—the power of money to open all musical doors and to let that great flood of ecstasy into her soul, as it came that one and only night set forever apart in her memory, when someone sent her a ticket for the symphony concert. Rush had taken her to the hall and left her, calling later for her after an evening at the Army and Navy Club. So she had sat alone in a tumult of strange emotions, swept clean off her feet by one of Beethoven's surging seas of sound. And when it was over she found she was trembling and icy cold to the finger-tips. More than one pair of masculine eyes watched the changing wonder of her face and pondered why this rare creature should be thus alone, and inwardly chafed at the conventions that no longer allowed a voluntary knight-

errantry to be offered when it seemed expedient.

But Joan herself was in a dream, and only awoke when later she clung excitedly to Rush's arm and thanked him as they walked home together for all the trouble he was taking to give her pleasure, the great depth of which she kept from him, lest in some way it might seem a reproach for past omissions or a demand upon the future. For Joan's jewels were those of her character: her tact, her intuition, her sympathy, courtesy and refinement.

"I wonder if Cloelia is right," she murmured, settling herself on the stone porch and once more returning to her mending; "am I only half alive? I wonder which is best? Are we put into the world to develop each his own being to its uttermost limit, as she says; or to do the little good that is nearest and love much, as the admiral says?"

And the answer came with the doubt. There was a shout in the hall and presently Patty, breathless, hot, dirty, tired enough to long suddenly for a little cuddling, climbed into the mother's lap and begged to be hugged, oh, tight, tighter! till the baby gave a little scream of delight and at once felt rested.

"Muzzer, how much do you love Patty?"

"As much as the flowers love the sunshine, pet," and that was the right answer, word for word, as expected. As Joan held the child closely to her breast the old contentment with things as they were returned to her, for the last time in such abundant measure and in such flawless perfection.

III

ONE exquisite fresh June morning about ten days later the admiral pronounced the grass free from dew, and immediately after breakfast Joan bustled busily forth to her old place on the lawn almost under the two little Judas trees, whom she had laughingly dared to do their worst. It was her "letter day," and all the world held aloof while

she dashed off the bi-weekly, many-sheeted document that carried to her husband the endless tale of her still vital love and a mother's wonder at the growing mystery of unfolding childhood at her knee.

It was very hot, with the humidity of Potomac borderland, and Joan wore an old white lawn—surpliced-necked for coolness—a belt of white ribbon clasp ing her full round figure, the dull gold buckle of which was the only touch of color about her. At her breast was pinned a spray of Lady Banksia roses, for it had been Roy's day to bring the flower for his mother to wear, and he was just beginning to realize her beauty and to have decided opinions as to what was becoming to her.

"Niobe before her life's grief began," muttered Admiral Sproull to himself, watching her as he took his morning exercise exactly as he had for over forty years, a poop-deck promenade, back and forth sixty times between the moss rosebush and the Japanese quince. It took twenty minutes, and that was enough for any man. His hands were behind him, his head bent until he reached the end of his beat, then he occasionally raised his eyes and swept a peaceful horizon.

Habit was so strong with the old sailor that it simply never entered his head to roam off in any one continuous direction as might a mere landsman, in search of sport or variety of scene. Waffles—his dog on many a cruise—at first felt compelled to attend upon the heels of his master when he would arise and put on his hat after breakfast, and the little terrier did so with the usual canine excesses of manner and voice. Now he came mournfully, a disillusioned dog, and followed at the admiral's heels for several lengths, doing his duty perfunctorily, sometimes even hopefully. Then as the strange tramp went on that led to nothing Waffles would drop out of ranks and sit apart watching and pondering upon this new human phenomenon, now and then even barking out his scorn of so profitless, objectless a performance—and the woods full of chipmunks and the fields alive with

jack-rabbits! He was in the midst of one of his protests, and for a change was wailing it out in long howls, his sad eyes on the tall figure tramping relentlessly before him, when the gate slammed. Waffles considered himself thereby relieved from duty, and flew to his post.

A slight, medium-sized man, with a dark, close-cropped pointed beard, stepped inside the gate and evidently said exactly the right thing to Waffles, for the terrier ran around in rings of hysteric approval for a moment and then flew to tell the children.

The friendly intruder glanced at the unconscious form bent over the low table under the trees, and then went on down the pebbled path to the front door. To do so he had to pass near the admiral. The two men exchanged glances, and the stranger's dark face lighted up with recognition and he stopped.

"Pardon me, sir, but am I not addressing Rear-Admiral Sproull?" he asked in a wonderfully pleasant voice.

"Yes, sir," briefly said the other, with the noncommittal air of the officer of the deck at the gangway.

"I had the honor, admiral, of cruising in your squadron on the South Atlantic eight years ago."

"Indeed? You have the advantage of me in memory; I regret to say I do not recall your name—and yet, wait a minute! I've got it! Your name is Trenly, G. Trenly—only you never used to wear a beard. It's that beard that stumped me for a moment, for I never forget an officer of my squadron." Out went the admiral's hand, enchanted with himself and hence pleased with everyone else.

"You are perfectly right, sir, I wore none in those days. Your memory would pass the most exacting board, admiral."

The two officers stood a moment smiling at each other, and then the younger fell into step and the commander-in-chief went on with his morning exercise, delightedly listening to news fresh from the European station. Suddenly he stopped short.

"By Jove, Trenly, I'm keeping you! You didn't call to see me, and here I've appropriated you, body and soul! Ah, my boy, my heart's in the old service—it's good to see one of you youngsters again, fresh from my old sweetheart—the sea."

"Had I known you were here I should have given myself the pleasure of calling upon you, sir; but as it is, I am seeking a shipmate's wife—Mrs. Conover," said the other.

"That is she over there, under the trees. Come, I will present you to her."

So together the two men crossed the lawn and joined Joan. As soon as she caught the name her face and manner flamed into a sudden extraordinary interest; she sprang to her feet and went toward him as a child might, her eyes dancing with pleasure, her hand out, her whole figure bending toward him in a welcome that left his heart beating—being a man, and young, and just home from a world of men. With one sweep of her arm Joan cleared the chair next hers, exclaiming in her bell-like voice:

"Sit down here, Mr. Trenly. I have waited so long for you! I have so much to say, to ask. It has seemed an age since Rush wrote about your coming. I've sat where I could see the gate ever since, until today—isn't that always the way?"

She had reseated herself, her superb figure erect, her smiling eyes clinging to those of her husband's messenger, with an interest entirely vicarious as yet, but charged with danger—and the admiral turned away chilled with a sudden sense of impending shadow.

"Don't go, admiral, please. I'll call Yunosuke to bring out your chair. He's late today, or perhaps I'm very early. I'm sure you two will find much to talk about. Just fancy, Mr. Trenly, he has only us—Mrs. Poyet and me!"

The lieutenant stood behind his chair, and as his laughing eyes met the older man's he said:

"Admiral Sproull can command all but my pity."

The retired officer bowed, and pres-

ently walked away. Meeting Cloelia on the porch, he broke out:

"Is it possible Mrs. Conover does not realize the effect of her beauty? Can't she see that a woman fashioned as she is has no business to fly at a young fellow as she did just now, her whole soul in her hand, and expect him to remember she's got a mythical husband somewhere up her sleeve!"

The widow laughed impishly while he explained, and replied in triumph:

"Go to her then, by all means, admiral, and say, 'Mrs. Conover, you must not be so outrageously pretty. It will never do, madam! Cultivate austerity of manner and speech, that men's heads may remain upon men's shoulders.' Shall I tell you what would happen? She'd look you in the face with those great, flower-like eyes of hers, and she'd say, 'Why, I'm a married woman!' and then where would you be, sir? No, she knows no more than Patty of life's possibilities; but that is as you wished it to be. That's your theory, remember, mine being that the armor of knowledge is a woman's only shield. It remains to be seen which of us is her wiser friend."

"There'll be the devil to pay some day, as sure as heaven's above us! A woman like that shouldn't be deserted for three years; it's not fair to—the rest of us!"

"Exigencies of the service!" mocked the widow.

"It won't do at all! It must be stopped, somehow. Deuce take it, peace of mind flies before women as fog before the midday sun!"

She laughed merrily in his face, and he stormed back at her, and gave further fruitless orders, and then he seized his hat and umbrella and went to town before luncheon; an unheard-of thing, and quite senseless, in all that heat.

In the meantime Lieutenant Trenly sat and watched Mrs. Conover and wondered how her husband could be satisfied with the several poor, cheap photographs of this glorious creature which, among others, adorned his cabin on the ship. Her absolute un-

consciousness of self, her innocent desire to please from sheer loveliness—never for an instant did he misread it, having a worldly man's almost infallible instinct about women before vanity or love steals his wits away. Trenly thought a little grimly of his own empty life, his lonely return to his native land, after three years' absence.

To her he was only Rush's *commissaire*, fresh from hearing the dear voice, touching the beloved hand; nevertheless the sweet love-light in her violet-blue eyes was a disturbing thing to face for a man straight from three years of sea life.

He had intended to stay fifteen minutes, deliver his package from Conover and leave as quickly as he decently could. He had brought parcels home to wives of brother officers before, scores of times, and he knew of no greater bore. They generally, poor things, made him stay to luncheon, and sometimes drove him to ceme-teries afterward on pleasure bent, in good American fashion.

But this time it was different. He had never seen such beauty as this woman's, and he had never seen such girlish ecstasy as when he handed her the package of lace and she opened it—he had to laugh aloud, and yet somehow it was infinitely pathetic to him. So he stayed and gave her an expurgated account of the cruise in the wardroom. She had met very few naval officers, because when Rush was on duty at a navy yard he had boarded in some inexpensive suburb; none but the few heads of departments having quarters in the yard. She had never gone to any of the naval festivities because, when on shore duty, Rush Conover suddenly turned into a dull, hard-working husband and father. Without actually intending to be a hypocrite, he led a double life; one on land, a devoted benedick, and quite another at sea, a bachelor free as air, a leader of cotillions in one round of pleasure in every port where they anchored; most of it, after all, harmless and always controlled by the old question of pinching economy—but, then, Joan was a won-

derful manager! And so it was the keenest pleasure to them both to talk on together under the rustling old oaks beside the Judas trees. And then he must—simply must—see Rush's children, and would he wait till she found them? Yes, he would wait—certainly; delighted. So she floated over to the house and gathered together her jewels and rubbed and scrubbed them into an abnormal presentableness, and came forth again flushed and breathless, Roy stalking in his sailor-suit in front, the mother leading the other two, all solemnly staring at "father's friend."

And again a sharp pang ran through Trenly's heart at this fair vision, the fairest in the world in a man's eyes, be he good, or bad, or just the average. The dear sweetness of it all! tired of men and ships, and in one of his old hungers for a good woman's love, children and a home. So Gustavus Trenly stayed on, indifferent to engagements, never having been a man to turn his back on an hour's happiness.

Patty was on his knee, a boy at either hand, the mother's fair head before him, again bent over her sewing, when Serafina announced luncheon, and he sprang to his feet, astonished at one of those sudden little spurts of a generally crawling Time familiar to us all.

Then Cloelia wandered forth, and after one look into her knowing eyes his hour in fairyland came to an end abruptly. Presently came also Miss Hester, who approached and extended an old-fashioned wordy welcome to a guest's guest, and so he stayed to luncheon, and it was after three o'clock when they all walked to the gate with him and saw him off, from Joan to Waffles.

And he went feeling that he had had a dream of paradise, and he wondered at Rush Conover and his ways.

The widow told the admiral all about it that night after dinner, and stoutly declared that if there was any evil in it it lay in his own imagination, else the Turks had the right of it! The old man regarded her with dis-

content for awhile and then left her; a man's vocabulary in talking to a woman is such a crippled thing, hobbling always in silly circles!

That same day Mrs. Poyet would unconsciously do Joan a harm, the admiral felt convinced; the former, he realized, having one of those cold natures so often misread by aliens, who mistake the sensibility of American women for passion. To convince a woman of that type of the possibility of danger to a woman of quite another type required a more brutal vocabulary than Admiral Sproull had ever allowed himself in the society of ladies. And, after all, it was only a prophetic feeling of his own so far; perhaps some day he would very gently speak to Mrs. Conover himself—since Mrs. Poyet refused.

No one but Joan was surprised to see Mr. Trenly when he appeared the very next Sunday afternoon, looking a little conscious for the first ten minutes, but assisted by pockets full of oblation for the children, which won for him another pathetic outburst from their mother. She had never been thrown enough with strangers to learn to regulate a distinctly perfervid manner, happiness and a busy, contented mind having preserved to her a marvelous youthfulness. Generous, giving more than she ever received always, objective in thought, wholly healthy in mind and body, full of laughing joyousness—a miracle of loveliness—she came like a revelation to this man of the sea whose heart was unfed at the roots, but who bore enshrined in the secret places of his soul, as every man does to the end, his ideal of womanhood.

Uncle Tom had stayed all day over at The Oaks, as Sister Clarice had gone over to Baltimore to try vibration massage for insomnia; all of which he stated with the utmost gravity, successfully challenging even Cloelia's quizzical glance to make him forget the courtesies due the interesting sufferer.

So it was he who suggested after the early supper that they should all

wander off to the woods together, to which they joyfully assented—all but the admiral, who refused to budge from his comfortable chair and the leisurely perusal of Grammont's memoirs. Waffles remained faithful, but suffering, beside his master's chair; yet when he heard the shouts of the children getting more and more faint he could not withhold a gentle whine. The admiral peered over his pince-nez at the unhappy wrinkled face of his little friend, laughed and said, "Go, Waffles, go!" and away the four feet scampered, stark mad with joy.

They wandered about and found the azalea, and the yellow dogwood, and the tiny wild pansies, and the late long-stemmed violets, and the early purple orchis. And Mrs. Poyet and Archibald quarreled and laughed and quarreled again, with Joan and Mr. Trenly for audience. The children and Waffles alone were serious with the unsmiling gravity of early animal life.

Once Joan's hat and hair became tangled in an obstinate bramble, and there she sat under the high-arching blackberry vines, and Cloelia had to loosen for her the great coils of golden brown hair to get her free; and sitting there, cowering and laughing, covered by the glory of her hair, the eyes of the two men dwelt upon her and then met guiltily, and Uncle Tom alone had the courage of his admiration, crying aloud:

"If I see many more of your phases, Joan, as I'm a sinner I shall become a convert to polyandry, and cable defiance to Rush Conover, even if he be my nephew."

On their way home, after they had left the sweet places in the woods and were in the rolling meadowland, Joan wandered on ahead of the others, singing to herself, as was her habit. Her white figure seemed on fire against the western sky, silhouetted on the red and gold and waving heat-vibration rising from the earth. Trenly looked ahead, hesitated, then impulsively followed her. Hearing her singing he lingered, following more slowly. He kept near her, his head lowered, walk-

ing silently. and so she caught him when she turned to look back for the others.

"Listening! And I thought I was alone and was doing such nonsensical things, as a canary does for experiment," she laughed.

"What a voice you have, Mrs. Conover!" was all he could say. "Strange Conover never told me, and yet he knows I'm a melomaniac of the acutest type."

"Rush does not care for music. I never sing for anyone but the children."

"Not in the world—in society?"

"Oh, yes, I forgot; Cloelia and Uncle Torm seem to like to hear me."

He turned and looked at her in amazement. Was that what the word meant to her—society?

"And you love it—music?" he asked.

"Oh, Mr. Trenly, isn't it the last supreme gift of the Creator, conscience-stricken too late after making the laws of life? Perhaps I should not have said that—but I mean it reverently."

"It expresses the tumult in us that finds no vent in action; the defiance of so many things as they are and should not be; the ambitions that are smothered in a silent soul," he said gravely.

"Oh, yes, and above all it expresses love, love, love!" she cried, her eyes like stars.

"To me music stands for all the emotions that have come to me as a woman," she went on. "I mean as a daughter, a wife, a mother. It always seems to fall under one of those three heads. I've had no other life, you see! Just one kind of love linked into another kind. Once I heard a terrible thing of Beethoven's, and I found I had not lived enough to know what it meant. It would not classify with the rest. It took hold of me and shook me from head to foot, that beautiful, terrible thing! And I knew, as I listened, that outside of the limits of my poor little happy life was a great world of unknown emotion, and I was frightened by that cry of agony, tumult, revolt."

"Perhaps it was love just the same, but refusing to come under your three captions," he ventured.

"Perhaps it was! Because there was evil in the music, discord, and oh, the suffering!" she cried. "And yet, do you know, it left me with a regret that my horizon is about the size of a saucer, as Cloelia says. You see, I have not had a big, broad sort of a life, Mr. Trenly. I was married straight out of school. Did Rush ever tell you? My wedding gown was my graduation gown, plus a veil. You see, father couldn't afford two good frocks in one year of the same sort, and Rush refused flatly to wait."

He smiled back at her, because she expected it; and he left unsaid what he had intended and bent his head as even a scoffer does while a prayer is being said within his hearing.

As they neared the house she called out:

"Well, admiral, here we are! Would it disturb you if I got my zither and sang something for Mr. Trenly before the others come? He has asked me. Please be frank; we can as well go to the library."

Admiral Sproull arose and made haste to beg her not to deprive him of sharing Mr. Trenly's pleasure. The admiral's manner was a little more elaborate than usual; his keen eyes met the younger man's with suspicion and defiance.

Then into the house sped Joan and out again, her hat gone, her old zither—Cloelia's wedding present—under her arm. Settling herself eagerly at the table covered with the admiral's Sunday papers, she rapidly tuned the instrument, and the men watched her and talked of other things. And slowly the young officer's views of Conover's character began to refocus themselves, judged by the standard of this wife of his—wasted upon his light, selfish nature.

Then, with a radiant face, she looked up—fitting the plectrum on her thumb—prepared to give her best, as she always loved to give, from a crumb to a sparrow on her window-sill to her great soul to the man whom she married.

"Please, Mrs. Conover, sing what-

ever you're in the mood to sing," said Lieutenant Trenly.

"Mrs. Conover has no moods, Trenly; she's too happy, too healthy." The admiral's tone smacked of the quarter-deck, as the younger man was quick to recognize.

She was already detached from them, and her beautiful hands stretched themselves and dragged harmony out of the short strings—hands to steer a man's life straight or wreck it altogether, thought the younger man, looking a little bored for the admiral's eyes. Jerking his glance up from the fascination of her hands, Trenly looked into her face, stirred to extreme sensibility, the lips apart, pouring out notes that vibrated her whole body. The wide divergence in that moment between what this young man wished to do and did do stands for civilization.

Puffing serenely at one of the admiral's Russian cigarettes, Gustavus Trenly knew that he was facing a possibility terrible from whatever point it was viewed—if he let himself go! It was all in that. That he had the power in him to move this woman he was absolutely sure—her vast capacity for happiness, her entire unconsciousness and ignorance, all would fight with him, not against. And on his side fate had caught him in a sentimental, heart-sore mood. And when he left the ship Rush Conover was known in all the salons of Venice, a brilliant figure in his uniform, the best dancer in the ballrooms, bending over pretty women, pretending to coax for the dances that had been kept for him in secret hopefulness. And later going back with all the others to the ship, singing along the Riva degli Schiavone to the landing. Trenly realized that Joan Conover knew no more than Patty herself of the realities of her husband's life. "A bad man would make use of that," thought he, shivering. And then he listened to her; singing as a bird does, a little drunk with sunshine and ecstasy of living, and all thought of evil vanished from his heart as he watched her, mentally suddenly on his knees before her. And then he

lighted a second cigarette before he tossed the tiny tip of the first away.

"Now, the admiral's favorite, and I'm done!" exclaimed Joan, and the old officer made a movement of pleasure at her thoughtfulness, and his heart went out to her in a strong feeling of fatherly protection, as he vowed in his heart that no evil should befall the child, if he had the power to prevent it.

She smiled into his sad old eyes, and sang blithely:

"A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast,
And fills the white and rustling sail
And bends the gallant mast."

When the words "our heritage the seal" ended her song Trenly arose, said abruptly that his temporary work at the Department was done, and that he was ordered to duty at the New York yard and would leave at once. Shaking hands with his two companions, he left a message for Miss Archibald and the others, and was gone.

"He makes me think of Rush," sighed Mrs. Conover, after the gate had clicked.

"Does he, indeed!" came drily from the admiral, who had lived a long, long while, and knew the meaning of many things.

IV

THERE must have been something very insidious in the charm of the old Archibald place, for September found both Mrs. Poyet and Admiral Sproull still there, rather to their own astonishment. When the days began to get cooler, toward the first of October, the library became the social centre.

A log fire was started in the huge old fireplace, Miss Hester's high-backed colonial armchair was put in its place on the right, in which when she was seated she was lost to view save for a bit of her black silk gown below the knee. On the left, and opposite it, was a Maryland settle, claw-footed and becolumned, into which Uncle Tom and all the children crowded Sunday nights, quite as if it were the only piece

of furniture in the room. As a result of being an ancient family of very few marriages, the house was full of wonderful old pieces of San Domingo mahogany; rare pieces here and there of tulip-wood and palisander; curious triple-backed Chippendale settees; a panoply of rusty swords in the broad hall, the oldest of which was carried by a Royalist in Roundhead days, the newest by a Confederate colonel, no less a person than Miss Hester's father. Treasures there were in the old house—where Henry Clay had paid wordy court to a once brilliant hostess—that would have made their fortune if the thought of selling any of it had ever entered an Archibald's imagination.

The library was a small room, all fireplace and book-shelves to the ceiling, Miss Hester's exquisite old desk beside one of the windows, the card-table that spent the summer on the lawn at the other, and between them the little table on which rested a "Breeches Bible" under glass.

Only standard books, *hors concours* in the literary world, filled the book-shelves. There had been no additions since Dickens; if any fiction had since been written they had not heard of it at The Oaks. Moreover, if it amounted to literature, ten years sooner or later made no difference whatever to people who owned first editions of Fielding and D'Arblay; books written when spelling was a mere matter of personal taste; quaint old duodecimos out of print two centuries, tucked behind the statelier quartos for lack of room.

Admiral Sproull was amazed at the wonders he discovered in the old family library of generations of reading gentlemen, and he gently taxed Miss Hester with her ignorance.

"No, sir, you are quite in error. Father brought us up with a great respect for this inheritance of his," she replied with quiet pride.

"So much so," interposed Tom Archibald, "that to be sent to the library for the afternoon was only a little less anathema than to be ordered to make ready for church."

"Brother Tom, I am astonished at

you!" cried Miss Hester, smiling a half-pleased motherly protest at the admiral, begging his leniency for frivolous youth and its froward tongue; and Archibald's deeply furrowed, weather-beaten face broke into the wayward smile of a spoiled boy, perfectly aware of the *nuances* of these scenes as his merry eyes met Cloelia's. To his two older sisters he was still a feckless lad of twenty, with that strange wisdom about mechanics and the intricacies of law that they found to be innate in the youngest male mind.

Down in the city, at the club, Sproull consorted with all the other retired admirals and generals, meeting daily, never at a loss for conversation with the tales of their old grievances, their old triumphs never quite all told.

He had to stand a lot of gibing as to the whereabouts and why of his retreat, kept such a mystery from them all.

And for answer he laughed and boasted: "I'm living under the same roof with the prettiest woman on earth today!"

"Trust Phil Sproull for that!" cried a gay old gentleman incorrigibly sprightly at three-and-seventy, the delicate audacities of whose conversation made him still a favorite among the fair sex.

Up at The Oaks Joan and Cloelia were absorbed in the rehabilitation of the former's wardrobe, for would not Rush be coming in the spring?

It had come about in this wise: One day said Joan, chattering under the strong excitement of her husband's letter just read:

"Cloelia—now you will not laugh?"

"I shall be the undertaker of your merriest thought, my dear!" vowed the other.

"Well, then, Cloelia—Rush, you know, does not like to see me poorly dressed—"

"I didn't—but I do!" cried Mrs. Poyet, quite like her old fantastic self these days.

"So while he's gone on a cruise I barely spend enough for pins—on my

clothes, I mean. I know you've been ashamed of me this summer, such rags and tatters!"

"How well you read my every thought—I haven't a friend whose appearance gives me less pleasure—idiot!" exclaimed Cloelia.

"Oh, I suppose I'm the same old me in everything—but my poor darned, turned, cleaned, dyed dresses! I have to remember not to raise my right arm in my Sunday organdie—such a darn! and in the old blue dimity I must always sit long and often on my left gores—Serafina is a dear, but she does scorch things! And a scorch Aunt Hester says is like a lie—it won't wash out, nor blue out, nor boil out. Well, so during Rush's cruises I manage to save a little every month—I start right in the moment he's gone—and then get a lot of pretty, fresh things for my lord's return! This cruise I have done perfect wonders. You wouldn't believe! Why, honey, I have almost sixty-five dollars to spend right now on my porcine self!"

Mrs. Poyet was careful to show all the surprise expected of her, her eyes bent lovingly upon her busy companion. Joan cut out a little garment, basted it, flew to the machine, sewed with a merry rush of the pedals, then back to the dining-room table, speechlessly absorbed in corner-turning for a few moments; and while they talked Patty was richer by a little apron.

"So next week I'm going to begin on my trousseau," laughed Joan, sitting back, her hands clasped behind her head. Cloelia got a pad and pencil, and leaned across the mirror-like old mahogany table, where great men had dined in the old days, and Hester Archibald, when a slip of a girl, was sent for and passed around with the port until her cheeks almost rivaled it in color.

"Now, Joan; first, what have you second, what would you like? third, what must you get? and finally, what can you get?" And at it tooth and nail they both went, oblivious of a larger world.

Far back in the widow's head several plans were taking form, to be carried out in secret.

"I know a dream of a little Swiss dressmaker, just making her way; it would be pure charity to let me give her some of your work. Cheap? Yes, a perfect wonder. Leave one or two things to me, please; I'll watch every cent. I'll take them with me when I go, and when you make me that promised visit this winter you can try them on. Not coming? Nonsense; of course you are coming! You will hurt me cruelly, Joan, if you disappoint me about it."

"Well, we'll see," said Mrs. Conover, hating to see any cloud return to her friend's face.

Before the demands of luncheon ended the feminine conference, Joan's heart was beating with the excitements of imaginary plumage, soon to be realized. To her it was a delicious dissipation, an almost fearful fascination, to which she alternately yielded with a thrill or drew back from with a chill of expedient doubt. To Cloelia it meant several things which she kept to herself, only her voice was very tender as she linked her arm within her friend's as they walked back to the dining-room when summoned, and she whispered in Joan's ear:

"In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove!"

The afternoon before Mrs. Poyet left The Oaks to return to her apartment in New York for the fast-approaching winter, she was sitting alone in Miss Hester's chair by the library fire, resting after a long morning's packing. Joan and the children were driving with Uncle Tom in Sister Clarice's carriage; the admiral had gone to the club with his usual promptness after luncheon and his one cigar. Miss Hester had been sent for by her sister to listen to a recent marked acceleration and arrhythmia of her pulse which left her completely exhausted, and which without doubt would soon put a full stop to an over-

wrought existence. Miss Hester's expression as she clicked the reins on Spark's back was singularly free from both haste and alarm, and it is to be feared Sister Clarice received a larger piece of Sister Hester's mind that afternoon than of her sympathy, with Brother Tom, the family buffer, not by to stand between.

So when Lieutenant Trenly was shown into the library Mrs. Poyet had him quite to herself. Even while she was making the usual conventional remarks conveying both surprise and pleasure at his unexpected appearance, she was aware of a curious little excitement as she arose and held out her hand.

He gave her a different impression somehow, dressed in his afternoon calling clothes; the straw hat and blue flannels had taken from his age and dignity. He seemed very much a man of the world holding the power of his comely manhood, his knowledge of life, his obvious personal monetary prosperity, in a strong grasp to be used to whatever end best beseeemed him.

"And they have all gone driving! Patty's heart will be broken; you are already in her prayers, Mr. Trenly; somewhere between Yunosuke and Waffles—I forget the exact sequence! Oh, why didn't you tell us you were coming!" exclaimed she.

"I came unexpectedly about a court-martial matter. I go back tomorrow, but I thought I'd run up and see how you all were, and bring that promised cow to Patty. I've got it somewhere—ah, here it is! You see, it does moo, as I told her," laughed he.

Then there was a little awkward pause, which Cloelia relieved by adding to her dole:

"And the admiral has gone, too, on that important duty at his club; where he finds in his letter-box three advertisements, two bills and an invitation to a reunion Farragut dinner in San Francisco! I made him confess one day that his sense of haste as regards his daily mail was very seldom justified. A retired military man, in full possession of his faculties, is pa-

thetically comic, or comically pathetic, as you choose. May it never befall you, Mr. Trenly!"

"Does that wish shorten my days or hasten my mental decay? You leave me in doubt," he answered merrily, feeling his disappointment at Mrs. Conover's absence so keenly, that above all things it must remain hidden.

"So you are at the New York yard—why!" murmured Cloelia, following a sudden thought that scampered by.

"Yes, thank goodness! I was afraid I should be dropped down into one of our small American towns where the repainting of the First Presbyterian Church represents art, where the local self-made potentate represents politics and his self-made wife society. And the entire town goes to bed at half-past nine! I wonder if you will understand me—or not misunderstand me, rather—when I ask you to conceive the miseries of a naval officer—a fellow who has no ties, like myself—immediately after three years of Europe and being in touch with rather big things, diplomatic, social, artistic, and so forth, to be sent to bed at half-past nine, just because there isn't one blessed thing to do after that! It happened to me once, and I'm glad to be in a big town this time. Any fool butterfly can come out of his cocoon, but the cleverest can't get back into it after trying his wings a bit."

"I'm going to take my old apartment this winter, I think I told you. I will send you my card. I'll have a day in December and January, and should be delighted to see you."

"Oh, thanks very much," came perfunctorily from the man of many invitations.

"You might help me in all sorts of ways, when Mrs. Conover comes, for I do want her to have one supremely, gloriously happy time before matrimony again swallows her up."

He sat listening intently, feeling himself pale at her words, which reopened a door he had been at considerable pains to close and bar securely within the past few months, bar even against his vrant thoughts. Where was the

admiral to stop that mischievous tongue, which rattled on and made reply unnecessary?

"I want my Joan to have one big gulp of happiness before the old chains are clamped down upon her. Oh, I know he's a friend of yours. That suppresses my opinion of Rush Conover, but it does not alter it. The unevenness of fate in a naval marriage! Unless somebody has some outside source of income and the wife can follow him, or when he is at home he is generous enough in his nature—if not his pocket—to make up to her for a little at least of the sacrifice of youth and opportunity, the long, patient, faithful waiting, the unshared responsibility of parentage, the petty economies that break one's heart to listen to!"

He leaned forward in his chair and remarked quietly, eyes on the fire:

"Of course, between us I fancy we can give Mrs. Conover a pretty good time. It helps a little to have a man about that you feel free to call upon to get tickets, and take you to places—sort of tame cat, you know."

"With no *arrières pensées* to bother about," suggested Cloelia comfortably.

"Exactly!" he assented, with gravity.

"Joan has never heard an opera, Mr. Trenly!" cried she tragically.

"Then may Conover's blood be on his own head!" laughed he, his own mounting to his dark face and surging at his temples. Seizing upon her still formless project, he shaped and developed and expanded it, and not until he plumply demanded a fixed date did she stop him with a breathless little laugh of protest.

"It's my pleasure to organize, and look ahead, and get things down in black and white," he explained coolly. "Can't help it to save my life—from Jacky's landing parties to a fair lady's whims."

His brilliant dark eyes looked very frankly into hers as he spoke, carrying the conviction of entire honesty of purpose, because that conviction was also in his heart. The daily "deliver us from evil" contains the germ of just

such situations. The reproachful eyes of the admiral, that had returned to Mrs. Poyet's mental vision for a moment, faded away again.

"A note will always find me at the Bachelors' Club at the yard," he said, rising and taking his leave.

He had been gone some minutes and Mrs. Poyet was still sitting smiling into the fire, when he suddenly reappeared at the door, and she looked at him in amazement.

"I came back to say this—I got out of the trolley and walked back—Mrs. Poyet, is it, after all, wise to disturb peace when one finds it in this world? Isn't it a little like the boy and his stones and the pond asleep with no ripple on its surface? Is it the best thing for—Mrs. Conover, all round, I mean?"

"Good heavens, you must have met Admiral Sproull!" cried Cloelia unthinkingly, and then found it very awkward to explain to him her meaning.

"Then you think it will be for her best?" He begged for acquiescence.

"Would I touch it if I did not think so?" laughed Mrs. Poyet, and they parted.

It comforted him somewhat in after years to remember that he had gone back that day and begged the widow to reconsider her plan to deliver Joan for a little from the suttee of a widowhood as cruel in her eyes as the law of widowhood in India.

After dinner that night, while Joan was putting the children to sleep and the admiral was smoking in the library, Mrs. Poyet wandered into the stately drawing-room with its quaint inlaid marqueterie furniture, and lighting the old gilt wall candelabra above the piano, she sat idly, playing softly to herself. Presently, hearing someone close the door behind her and thinking it was Joan, she asked:

"Is that you, dear?"

"Well, it's what I'd like to be—dear," rumbled out the unmistakable voice of Thomas Archibald, a trifle more husky than usual. She laughed and played on.

"If you'll stop playing I'll ask you to marry me," came next from the shadows behind her. She continued playing.

"Is that your answer?"

No other was vouchsafed.

"Do you realize, madam, that there is a human being madly in love with you, standing with difficulty at a certain distance behind you, heartbroken at your going away tomorrow, and begging for about an ounce of hope?"

The chords became distinctly interrogative.

"A pennyweight, then, parsimonious but charming creature?" If that wasn't a soft affirmative, then he had lost his hearing!

"You will?" he cried, going nearer. "You really might do worse, Mrs. Poyet. If not young in years, his heart is still teething; if not handsome, he is quite distinguished-looking, if he'd only remember to stand straight; his pocket is sometimes full and sometimes empty, according to the crops; but ask when it's full and it shall be given thee; anyhow, the blood in his veins is fairly clogged with bluing! He's nothing but a jester, but each bell on his cap and sorry sceptre tinkles, 'I love you, I love you!'"

The pale hair looked golden under the candlelight, and the head drooped a little sideways coquettishly.

"Some day, then, you'll marry me? When everything else fails, of course. At the cannon's mouth, as it were? With your third to the last breath you will say, 'Thomas, I will!' And then I'll have two breaths of heaven—and that's several more than I ever expected! All right—shake!"

Out went his hand, and laughing she turned and put hers into it, and then arose from the piano stool.

"Now, remember, we're as good as engaged!" he insisted.

"Why, of course," she said, still laughing and closing the piano.

As he raised his head to blow out the candles in the sconce, she was startled to see how white and sad his face was, and for one fleeting second she wondered if she and the rest of the

world always understood Tom Archibald. Then with a merry interchange of burlesque love-making they left the room together, and joined the others in the library, and even Miss Hester laughed till she cried when Brother Tom announced the mock-engagement.

In the end Cloelia Poyet had her way and carried all barriers, smoothed away all difficulties, and the admiral saw Mrs. Conover off the day she left for her long talked of visit to New York. The memory of her flushed, happy face smiling at him out of the car window, as she leaned out and sent a score of messages back to Aunt Hester, and Uncle Tom, and Serafina, and the children themselves, did much toward allaying his strong antagonism to the whole undertaking.

Cloelia had written that Joan should be met by someone in Jersey City, and what more natural than that Lieutenant Trenly should be that one, relieving Mrs. Poyet of that always onerous task?

Joan's joyous greeting of him quite repaid him for a strenuous morning at the yard which had won for him an afternoon of freedom.

They glanced obliquely at each other, noting the effect of a season's change in costume. To her he seemed a very notable-looking man, the best dressed she had ever known—not handsome like Rush, of course, but—well, there certainly was an indescribable air about this friend of her husband's.

In his eyes as they walked toward the ferry she seemed to him the bonniest woman in the world, in her simple dark blue suit and hat, and the black lynx boa and muff Cloelia had sent her for Christmas. At that moment nothing but the knightliest wish to help two women, who trusted him, to a little honest happiness in life possessed his soul.

From the moment she passed him her check for her one small trunk all her traveling cares ceased, he saw to everything quietly, serenely—she could not help thinking of Rush's

bluster—and she moved along from station to ferry, from ferry to a cab, but there she stopped.

"Oh, I never take a cab, please, Mr. Trenly! I send my trunk and go by trolley when I travel. It's little things that count so in traveling, and I'm being wickedly extravagant anyhow by coming at all."

"Since you were here the tariff has changed, and it's cheaper now to take a cab than use the express, and I know Mrs. Poyet wants your trunk to arrive when you do; she's got something on for the afternoon," he solemnly asserted, having had his instructions from Cloelia that Joan's pride and purse must somehow be spared, at whatever cost to their own paltry principles.

"Oh, is it!" Joan said, and he helped her in, his eyes twinkling as she handed him her slim little purse. It seemed but a moment later when they dashed up to the great apartment house, and soon the two women were in each other's arms. After the first excited voluble whirl of greeting between the two Cloelia cried:

"Now, Joan, we haven't one single second to spare. There's a loan exhibition of paintings at the Union League Club, and of course we are going—what woman ever declined to go to a bachelor's dinner or a man's club when she gets a chance? We'll have tea there. It'll be perfectly jammed, but I want everybody to meet you or see you anyhow, as soon as possible, in the stingy little fortnight you've given me! Look straight at me, Joan. I think you'll do as you are. Don't you think Mrs. Conover will do as she is, Mr. Trenly? What sort of a blouse have you got on? No, that will not do, for it will be sweltering and our wraps must come off. Please ring that bell, Mr. Trenly, and when Janet comes send her to me at once in Mrs. Conover's room. Come along, Joan. We'll not be fifteen minutes; truly, Mr. Trenly, not a second more. Sure you don't mind waiting? Smoke—do anything you like; I prefer friends to furniture any day."

So a breathless, laughing Joan was taken possession of and rushed into one of the two dresses Mrs. Poyet had undertaken to have made for her—a light gray Japanese crêpe Rush had brought her home years ago from a former cruise. A billowy mass of chiffon and lace it was now, thrown over her head by nimble-witted Janet before poor bewildered Joan had time for more than a gasp of astonishment.

"Didn't I tell you she was a treasure, that Swiss dressmaker? It looks nice enough to eat with a spoon. And just wait till you see her ridiculous bill—it ought to be framed! Oh, and Joan, I found one of my last year's hats that matched exactly, and Janet dodged it up for us, so please just slam it on and come. We haven't time to talk and argue; we'll do that afterward."

The maid was transfixed by one quelling glance from her mistress's pale eyes, and held her peace, glorying in the picture now standing before the pier glass. In the soft silver gray from head to foot stood Joan, the large hat framing the lovely face, now ablaze with excitement, the gray ostrich tips tumbling over one another to peep down at her over the rolling brim.

"Now grab your furs—no matter what other clothes you've got on this winter; Joan, don't forget your muff. If we don't hurry Lieutenant Trenly will be ordered to sea. Come!"

Throwing a long cloak over her dazed friend's shoulders and seizing one herself, Cloelia fled to the elevator and rang furiously, sending Janet to the drawing-room for their escort.

In a gale of laughter they crowded into one of the cabs loitering at the entrance and dashed up the Avenue. All forms were clearly outlined in the brilliant, cold sunlight, all colors stood out sharply; only the sounds were muffled by asphalt and rubber. Everything movable seemed bent upon a tremendous speed. Lines of carriages sped up and down full of gaily dressed women with joking lips and weary eyes. In the midst of the "chaos of so-called civilization," Joan's eyes grew wistful and she cried:

"Oh, Cloelia, I'm frightened and my babies seem very far away! I've never been part of it before; I've always been on the sidewalk watching." Mrs. Poyet and Lieutenant Trenly laughed excitedly; their dream was coming true.

At the well-known corner they stopped and joined the chattering, laughing throng within, slowly moving up and down the stairs in two opposite currents. In the great room above, where tea was served, grave portraits frowned darkly down upon a gay picture of "confections and persiflage."

"Now, find us a table, Mr. Trenly, and we'll let poor Mrs. Conover rest and catch her breath before we do anything else. Even a Barbizon will look better after tea and cake."

So they settled themselves and threw off their wraps, Cloelia's very tall, slight figure all in black giving—as she meant it should—the exact note necessary in the picture to bring out her friend's fair beauty in the gray. Whenever Joan's sweet glance wandered about the room she found eyes staring into hers, and the two conspirators exchanged delighted looks.

Before long several men stood conspicuously in the line of Trenly's gaze, much to his amusement, and for some time he ignored them; presently he asked offhand, after Joan had had her refreshment in comfort:

"By the bye, do you ladies care to meet a lot of men I know here? They are hovering in the distance, hungry as wolves to know the two most stunning women here today."

"Do we care to meet a lot of men!" scorned Mrs. Poyet. "Are we alive? Are we sane? Bring them up at once, sir; what do you mean!"

And the wolves came like smiling lambs. There were two French naval officers Trenly had met in the West Indies; there was an English baronet, a globe-trotter he had first met at a Government House dinner in Hong Kong and had been running across ever since all over the world; there was a handsome surgeon from the navy

yard and an old member of the club whose guests they were.

In a crowded room it takes some time before even pre-eminent beauty begins to tell. It permeates a throng slowly, in whispers that travel from one ear to another. In the social world, where all women somehow succeed in giving at least the impression of beauty and where one's dreary eyes have searched in vain for hours for the real jewel, one is slow to believe when a friend murmurs: "They say there's a beauty here today—the real thing! Who is she? And where?"

But within an hour there were few women and no men who had not searched for and found Joan. If she had been singing to them there would have been no more faces turned toward her, wherever her eyes wandered.

One of the French officers had concentrated his somewhat worn charms upon Joan from the moment he was presented, and leaned close to her, speaking so low the rest could not hear. Presently Trenly saw her start and blush and turn toward the others, saying hurriedly:

"When do we see the pictures?"

They seemed to consider this a witty speech and laughed, but Trenly lifted her wrap from the back of a chair and said quietly:

"Come, I'll take you to the gallery."

As they moved away, she said:

"I think that man talking to me must have misunderstood your introduction. He did not know I was married, and said such odd things to me. I was so glad to come away; and now, do tell me why they all laughed. Perhaps there are no pictures. What is it?"

"The object of a social gathering is generally the most inconspicuous element connected with it, you'll find."

At the door of the gallery the two old club members who amused themselves dealing out the programs had a little laughing fight as to who should claim the honor of handing one to the beauty as she passed. She smiled, took one from each and thanking them passed on. No great belle of the

realm could have done better in the little scene, and Trenly made mental note of it to add to Mrs. Poyet's triumph. The crowd was beginning to leave the little gallery and pass on to the library, so they could see a picture now and then.

Slowly they made their way about the two small rooms, moving with the throng which talked loud and learnedly the patois of art.

"Fenner's always the same—that green skin of his!" cried a gray-haired, disheveled dame, who was clawing feverishly for her pendent lorgnette. Her companion spoke trenchantly.

"Henner, I mean, of course. What did I say? Quite the same, quite the same. And then here's dear old Troyon and his cows. I always look round for a fence, they are so real!" she giggled girlishly.

Her friend, who hated her, spoke again.

"Van Marcke? Is it? Well, what's the difference? They couldn't tell themselves apart," which was very hard on both of them. Joan did not say very much as the two strolled about, till they came to a final corner where, well on the line, was a picture before which she stood in silence. A perspective of many miles of translucent landscape, brought out in some marvelous way by delicate shadings, ever of the same brilliant silver tone; a burnished sheet of water sleeping in the middle distance, and like a delicate black lace veil covering a beautiful face, over the foreground was dropped the faint fine tracery of dark gray trees. A shepherd lad, half-clad in skins, leaned against a tree trunk absorbed in his flute, on his head a tiny scarlet cap, the only bit of vivid color in the painting.

"You may have all the others, Mr. Trenly—but leave me this!" cried Mrs. Conover. "It seems to me it's a picture of my own life, so quiet, so dull in tone, but so full of peace. And there I am playing my own little flute all to myself, happy as the day is long."

"Madonna della Sedia, I tell you! I guess I know what I'm talking about!"

suddenly was hissed in a sharp whisper close behind them, and Joan asked what the woman meant. Trenly smiled into her wondering face, and said:

"Don't you really know, Mrs. Conover? She meant you, of course. I thought of it the moment I saw you with Patty in your arms. I ran up to Dresden from Trieste not long ago."

"I've only seen photographs and engravings of all the great paintings; I wish I could see the colors. I suppose I never shall," she sighed.

"I know where there are several good copies. I'll take you some day, if we can ever get out of Mrs. Poyet's clutches," he replied, realizing how difficult a thing it was to reach this woman's vanity.

She turned and they went on to the stately library, where they found Mrs. Poyet surrounded by her little court. Three women friends had joined her, and as soon as Joan met them they invited the beauty at once, one to a *poudré* dinner, one to a cotillion, the third to a box and supper party.

"I shall have to place myself in Mrs. Poyet's hands," smiled Joan, standing all smiles, pleased as a young girl with a fast filling dance-card, and Cloelia gloried in her. Have her they must, these hospitable women, if only as a bait for difficult men; and Mrs. Poyet's hands were full as they strolled back through the fast emptying rooms. Trenly caught Joan looking back at the Corot, and she smiled a little tremulously, murmuring:

"Ah, my silvery peace! Shall I ever find my way back to it?"

V

It was as well that Mrs. Conover was possessed of perfect health and nerves like steel. Her endurance was severely tested during the first nine days of her visit, for it was given up to one continuous whirl of what the restless world calls pleasure. Dinners and dances, luncheons, suppers, theatre parties filled to overlapping the hurrying

days and nights. To find time for her daily letter to The Oaks was no small task for Mrs. Conover.

The musical program for Joan's amusement had weeks ago been turned over to Lieutenant Trenly, from the hiring of a harp zither for a month to the tickets for the Ring of the Nibelungen, which was to be given at the opera house the second week of her stay, and before which lesser things were ordered to retire. Cloelia had taken her one night to hear "Aida," and it meant so much to Joan, such strangely intimate things, that she could not speak of it beyond a cold, meagre thanks to her disappointed friend. She might as well have put into words what the first kiss of her first-born had meant to her years ago! But Trenly understood the great reserve of all passionate natures, whose very vulnerability to emotion demands that shield. The very anticipation of hearing the Ring gave Joan shivers of half delight, half pain, for she knew that it was to be the apotheosis of her inner life.

Mrs. Conover's real debut was made, however, the second night after her arrival in New York, at a dinner given by Mrs. Poyet, followed by a little reception and "some music."

Joan had been what Cloelia called "very nice" about the gray dress, believing implicitly all that was told her; but when—not without qualms—Mrs. Poyet brought in the white evening toilet and told another barefaced tale about the occult powers of her Swiss modiste, even Joan laughed.

"Cloelia, where do you expect to go when you die?"

"Try it on, just for fun, Joan. You'll never take it off again as long as you live!"

"Then I'd better not put it on till evening anyhow. Ah, Cloelia, you are hopeless. Do you suppose that that ten yards of white *crêpe de Japon* that I handed you made itself into this thing that looks like a spider's web full of morning dewdrops! How on earth shall I ever pay for it? It will take years and years," sighed Mrs. Conover.

"Well, I did take the liberty of adding a few old scraps of lace of my own, Joan, if you must know the truth. And for heaven's sake, if it makes you feel any better, when you get through with the dress you can rip them off and pay every cent for the cleaning and return them to me by express prepaid—for goodness' sake don't forget to prepay the express! I never saw such a fuss about every little thing I choose to do for you, and you know perfectly well, Joan Conover, how alone I am in the world—no daughters, no sisters and such things to fuss over! I only know men, men, men—and whoever had any fun playing with a boy doll? You take every bit of my pleasure away with your everlasting haggling about money—instead of being large-minded and generous about it—it takes as much generosity to receive as to give. I did think I had at least one friend in the world!" stormed Cloelia, taking out her handkerchief and dabbing at her eyes, her voice at least full of tears.

And after that Joan, in a burst of self-abasement, promised anything and everything in the way of cheerful compliance.

"I'll be your wax doll, and you shall dress and undress me all day long, dear. Come, Cloelia, come—we'll try it on now, for I'm honestly dying to."

"Well, I haven't much heart left for it now, but I suppose we had better see if it's right about the shoulders," grudged Cloelia, sniffing a little and keeping up her pose awhile longer, to cover some jeweled ornaments on the bodice of the dress, which had not yet quite dawned upon her friend.

Never a word said Joan while yielding herself to the solemn rite of robing, save for sundry ejaculations of feminine ecstasy as the effect of the whole began to develop itself. But when it was accomplished and Cloelia pushed her in front of the mirror, the storm broke.

"Never, never, never! Not even for you will I wear a dress cut like that about the shoulders! Something's got

to be done to it at once—I'll make a lace yoke or—something——"

"Oh, yes, do! Make a guimpe of pink crinkled paper and pin it on, as I saw in a farmhouse once! It was a low-necked lithograph of a pretty actress, and the farmer's wife was too economical, and also too hungry for pictures, to throw it away altogether, but of course no decent woman could have that on the wall; but with the pink paper pleated yoke it was all right and didn't interfere with evening prayers!" Cloelia's tone was withering and her nose well in the air, and light-hearted Joan laughed till the tears came.

"So perfectly silly the way you go on, Joan, as if you had the only really sacred shoulder-blades in the world! And for the matter of that, I call that a high-necked dress! Wait till you see what I'm going to wear; and as for the other four women coming tonight—well, you'll feel like a tract on feminine modesty before the evening's over!"

Yokeless, Joan was sitting in the drawing-room that evening waiting for the guests when Lieutenant Trenly arrived. As she arose and held out her hand to him he drew in his breath and knew at once that he was in deep water and fast losing his footing. He had had himself well in hand up to that moment, firmly determined to remain true to the triangular trust imposed in him by Lieutenant Conover, his brother officer; by Mrs. Poyet, his hostess; by Joan's absolute confidence in him. Mentally he saw clearly all around the situation, which did not in the least prevent waves of emotion from tossing him about as if he were a bit of driftwood.

He could not speak for a moment lest he should say too much; finally came a meagre:

"You're looking pretty fit tonight, Mrs. Conover."

"It's the dress. Isn't it a dream of bliss, unalloyed? I ought to look nice, because I feel so nice!" she cried, moving about, looking back at her train like the veriest schoolgirl.

"The fact is you're too beautiful to have any vanity," he exclaimed, "for is not vanity the crutch rather of our weaknesses than of our excellencies?"

"Yes, I see exactly what you mean; and that's what Rochefoucauld means when he says: 'Speak to a pretty woman of books, to a witty woman of her looks,'" she replied, as serenely as if they were discussing Mary of Scotland.

"Well, if it's in the script of that old expert sinner, there's nothing further to be said," returned he; "we'll talk henceforth of books, you and I!"

Before anyone else arrived to note it he looked with the keen pleasure of an artistic nature at her fair head, the outline of which was not lost in the simple arrangement of the hair; the glistening marble of her throat, shoulders and round forearms coming like long pistils out of the broad corolla of her sleeves; and above all the splendid repose of her whole person as she sat before him. No, he had not set himself an easy task! And yet Rush Conover could look at other women and have his little seaport flirtations hither and yon! This was a woman to satisfy every fibre in a fine man's soul, and spoil his senses forever for a lesser perfection. Ah, what might his own life have been if he had met and won her first! With his private means outside of his pay he could have framed her life as it deserved to be, given her the food her soul longed for, very far removed from Mrs. Poyet's rather bohemian entourage. It would have been one of the world's few flawless passions, for he was so sure he could have won from her such a love as Rush would never know as long as he lived!

"What are you thinking of, Mr. Trenly? You are scowling at me as if you didn't quite approve of me," said Joan, with a laugh.

"I was thinking—shall I tell you? I was wishing—you had a twin sister," he ended tritely enough. He could not make one of his usual speeches for which he was famous, with those clear eyes looking fully at him and disinfecting, as it were, his every thought. And then Cloelia swept in only a

moment before her guests began to arrive.

To Joan it was all dreamland, the table brilliant with candles and yellow orchids and ferns in the centre, the silver and glass reflecting the golden light shed through the yellow jeweled candle-shades; the pretty women in their soft-toned gowns that served but to enhance the hard brilliancy of their jewels; the men here and there, like dark leaves entwined in the table's pretty wreath of humanity. Joan felt as if she had never known this Cloelia, in so strange, hard, brilliant a mood was she, saying strange things, too, leaning forward holding the whole table, and laughing with the others when the laugh came. But Joan had her hour later, as Mrs. Poyet meant that she should, when after dinner a score of others wandered in to meet the beautiful Mrs. Conover.

At exactly the right moment Mrs. Poyet hinted to one of the men that her friend sang; then, of course, he went at once to her and demanded what was due the world from such a talent.

"I would with pleasure," laughed Joan, "but I left my drum at home, as the little boy said." Even as she spoke Lieutenant Trenly appeared with the beautiful inlaid zither and Janet followed with a low table.

"Mrs. Poyet found a 'drum' that perhaps will do," she said.

"They're always finding things, these two friends of mine!" murmured Joan, already fingering the unaccustomed strings, coaxing them into harmony; and then she looked up and said as unconsciously as she would to the children and Uncle Tom:

"What would you like?"

"Whole bill of fare, please, from caviar to green chartreuse!" cried the man who was obviously the social harlequin of his clique, and all worn out by that most relentless of roles.

Mrs. Poyet appealed to the room:

"And I've just fed that man! Would you suppose it?"

"Well, all I said was *bis*! What more does any successful artist want?"

then he patted himself approvingly on the head, and warmly shook his own hand and they all laughed from habit.

Then Joan's clear voice rang out, beginning to grasp this queer little game with words:

"For caviar to my public I think I'll sing the *Benedicite*!"

"She is human!" whispered the heartbroken comedian. "I've been so shy and nervous all the evening, not being used to an angel's society. This came as such a relief!"

And then Joan sang to them, and the first song told their trained ears that she never had been taught the secrets of singing, and the second song told them she had a secret of her own; and the laughter and the nonsense ceased and the smiles fell off their faces like masks, and they avoided each other's eyes; for she sang at their souls, and that is a thrust below the belt and disconcerting in the gay world.

"And now a lullaby!" demanded their hostess unthinkingly; and then, of course, the funny man started for the door, dragging a friend by the arm.

"'Good night,' said the polite dog, 'I really *must* be going,' etcetera, etcetera," quoted the court fool.

But Mrs. Conover gave them a lullaby full of pretty sarcenet chidings to a wakeful child, and when it was over one of the men who had silently hung about her all the evening leaned above her and said in a low tone:

"Could anything alive go to sleep while you scolded like that?"

It was not so much the words as the man's eyes that offended her, and the blood flew to her face. Holding up her head she said coldly:

"I am glad you liked it. It is the favorite lullaby of my three children," and she declined to sing again, moving from her place and joining the gayer group about Mrs. Poyet.

There was other instrumental music, then followed the daintiest of suppers, during which two Neapolitans sang their native songs, accented volcanically; and after a little champagne the men began to join in, and presently formed a circle about Joan, clinking

glasses with her as they passed before her. After a little helpless embarrassment she joined merrily in with the spirit of their fun and sang with them. The widow and the lieutenant stood apart and beamed at each other. It was all going so well—Joan was quaffing eagerly the glass of pleasure they had prepared for her. The picture she made standing there remained in the memory of one in that room as long as he lived.

The days and the nights sped by, and Mrs. Conover and Mr. Trenly had one intense feeling, unshared: "I have never lived before!" He thought it with jaws set to carry through his task like a gentleman, willing to pay later the accruing penalty, whatsoever it might be. She thought:

"I've looked over the edge of my little saucer at last. Can I ever be satisfied with my old six-inch diameter again? That's what the admiral meant when he said: 'Don't go!' and yes, that's what Cloelia meant when she said: 'Come!' I begin to understand them both now."

Fate, however, had a card or two up her loose sleeve, and she played them with effect during the second week of Joan's visit. Every two days the mother had had a letter from Aunt Hester telling her that the children were well, with gratifying monotony. Then came news that her old guest, Professor Pfarre, had written asking if his room was vacant at The Oaks, to which, she wrote, she had replied, "quite unceremoniously in the negative, Mrs. Poyet having retained her room." Then Tom Archibald wrote that Sister Clarice had very suddenly made up her mind to try the Nauheim baths, and he had just returned from seeing her and her nurse off in the steamer sailing from Baltimore to Boston, for so she had whimsically decided to go, having small confidence in any but a certain transatlantic line, and dreading the changes by land. Thus left an idle bachelor farmer in the midst of winter, Archibald threatened to come on and see his lady-love,

reminding Cloelia of their plighted troth.

"Dear old Uncle Tom!" cried the widow, slipping the letter into her pocket, greatly to Joan's astonishment, who caught her re-reading it that night when, after an evening at the theatre, they met in the hostess's pretty boudoir and brushed and braided their hair together, as sirens have done since Ulysses sowed his wild oats long ago.

The accident happened the very next morning. Joan stayed at home steeping herself in Nibelungen lore, for the Ring began that night, to which it had been arranged from the first that Mr. Trenly was to take them, dining with them two of the nights and they with him at some café the other two. But Mrs. Poyet, to whom it was a very old story, started off alone after breakfast on a shopping expedition, her head full of presents that Joan was to take to the children. She took a cab, objecting strongly to what she called "the step-lively familiarities" of American officials in more public conveyances. She had looked about for an automobile cab, but seeing none and spying a likely nag, she hailed a hansom and was soon flying down the Avenue, the glass down because the wind was bitingly cold and "the wrong things get rosy in my pale face," as she was wont to put it.

The sudden stoppage of the long lines of carriages passing up and down, followed by the furious clanging of an ambulance coming from behind left the young horse attached to Mrs. Poyet's cab frantic with fear. With a snort the pony started back and reared. Shouts came from behind up the line of cabbies whose raised whips did little to save the situation. The colt plunged and then bolted down the Avenue between two close-drawn lines of carriages. Cloelia sat erect and very still facing twenty deaths a minute, as they rushed madly down the middle of the street, the police shouting warnings ahead. With a slow, rigid movement she pushed up the glass and opened the doors, hear-

ing which the driver called through the opening above her head:

"Keep yer seat, miss; no good jumpin' out."

On the cab went, zigzagging like a drunken thing, faster and faster. Men ran out and snatched at the bridle of the terrified horse, missed it, and so served only further to madden the animal. All faces were turned watching the white-faced, rigid woman who sat as if frozen inside the swaying vehicle. Women prayed aloud in whispers, children broke into sobs, men cried out to her again and again as she flew by: "Don't jump! for God's sake, don't jump!"

Far down the street her reeling consciousness made out a line of police barring their path determinedly. The horse's eyes were young, and he saw it, too, and swerved violently to the left. There was a crash, a splintering, grinding sound, one short, terrible scream, and then silence.

When Mrs. Poyet opened her eyes, two hours afterward, she was in her own bed, a doctor was counting her pulse, watch in hand; a trained nurse knelt by her pillow; and Joan's pale face was at the foot of the bed, a look of agony in her great eyes. Cloelia tried to smile, but suddenly closed her eyes again as a great wave of pain and faintness swept her once more out upon the boundless sea of unconsciousness. When she returned she was in full possession of her faculties and cried out:

"Now, understand, all of you, I will not have any notes written or telegrams or telephones sent breaking engagements. I'm all right, only a little sore in my muscles and a little excited. Such a to-do about nothing! Anybody would be a little excited, wouldn't she, doctor? I will not have any nonsense, do you hear? You are to have your music just the same, Joan. Perhaps I can't go to-night, but 'Die Walküre' will find me in my seat. I'm right about that, am I not, doctor?"

But there was something in his kind old eyes that made her silent for a

moment; then she asked the nurse and Joan to leave her with her physician. Turning to him when they were alone she said in her peremptory way:

"Sit down there where I can see if you are telling me fibs or not. Doctor, is it more than nerves?"

"Yes, Mrs. Poyet."

"Am I seriously hurt?"

Then very gently he told her the truth with such infinite tenderness in his voice that she knew him well enough to realize that he had withheld some of it. He explained why she was not aware of her condition at once, and what had happened in those two hours of blankness, ending with:

"Even you can't go through a thing like that and come out of it smiling like a rubber doll! You're lucky, let me tell you, young lady."

After a moment, during which she stared with dilated eyes and a face like wax, he leaned over and touched her hand with a kindness that reversed the meaning of his last words. Struggling up upon her pillows, she was stopped by a sharp pain, and fell back helpless, conquered. Tears began to run down her face, and when she tried to wipe them away with her right hand, she found she had to use her left.

Presently she said brokenly:

"And I had planned a little trip to fairyland for my friend in there! I was so sure above all things of myself! My whole heart has been in it. It was just her one little chance in all of her life for pleasure—her one little chance! Doctor, listen. This you can and must do for me, and then I'll do everything you wish. Listen: promise me you'll tell her nothing of my hurt—she must not know or it will all end. I know her; she would not leave my bedside. Doctor, she does not already know?" cried Cloelia in a sudden panic.

"No one knows but the nurse and me, Mrs. Poyet. Try to be calm; it shall all be as you wish, trust me. We'll call it nerves and a slight sprain; how will that suit you?"

Then only did her face relax into something like a smile.

When Trenly sat down alone with Joan to dinner that night in Cloelia's apartment, he wished he had kept up his old early prayer: "From the crafts and assaults of the devil, spare us, good Lord!" Janet had handed him a note from Mrs. Poyet, and after reading it alone in the hall upon his arrival his face grew pale and his teeth went together in grim determination. He knew beyond all questioning that the supreme hour of his character had struck; the week at hand would test what manner of man he was.

But the dinner passed quietly enough; she was still so unstrung by Cloelia's narrow escape from death that all mere pleasure had shrunk into the background of her thought. She had begged to stay at home and been so furiously assailed by Cloelia for ingratitude that the nurse urged Joan aside to humor her patient as much as possible; it was the doctor's orders. So she had hastened to apologize and promised to throw herself "soul-forward" into that strange subterranean world of music, down among life's fundamentals, groping and grappling in the dark with strong things like hate and love and revenge and the thirst for gold—Wagner's Tetralogy.

So at the table they talked of that and the traditions thereof. They had always, from the first, found it very easy to talk to each other, and she felt that she must try to appreciate it fully, in return for all her two friends' care and kindness; it would be the only true way to thank them.

When Trenly, sitting alone at the table after dinner, knocked the ashes off his cigar end and saw that his finger was trembling, he sprang to his feet and muttered angrily:

"Good God, am I going to break down?"

Presently Mrs. Conover rejoined him, after half an hour with Cloelia. She was dressed very simply, what Mrs. Poyet called "*à la Rheingold*"—as there's no audience, no intermission—

an evening without form, and void, a perfect horror! I'm so glad I'm not going, to tell you the truth!"

Mrs. Conover was nevertheless a dangerously exquisite creature for a man to sit beside alone in the palpitating darkness for several hours of ever-mounting emotional excitation.

Their seats were in the first row above the tiers of boxes, full in front, on the aisle. Lieutenant Trenly had for years been familiar with every drawback of the opera house and knew what he was about. Not a single personality obtruded its disturbing self between them and the stage, only an obscure inchoate mass of souls somewhere below in the dark.

They were in a suspended world of their own, apart from all others; he was in the aisle seat, she next, and the seat on the other side empty! It is to his credit that Trenly longed unspeakably for Mrs. Poyet's presence that night of the Prelude.

Joan sat absolutely detached, wondering, bewildered, unconscious of self, after one soft murmur of childish delight when the curtain rose on that first exquisite setting of the Rhine Daughters.

Much later on Freia's motif gave her that first taste of the musician's power to emotionalize sound that was almost to overwhelm her before the Ring was at an end.

Much of what followed was dark and repulsive to Joan, like the things she had turned away from all her life, but dramatically she grasped its verities, even while longing, almost stifled, for the light to come again and the "Golden Apples" of love to return. She gave a little low laugh of pleasure when the infinite humor of Loge's sardonic music came instead. Trenly heard with her ears, saw with her eyes; he seemed merged with her in one consciousness—his own had no separate existence that first night.

Once he leaned back in his seat and, turning his eyes, looked long at the beautiful head, perfect in its simple womanliness, close beside him leaning forward in her eagerness.

Scores of women of many nationalities had come and gone in his life, and yet as he looked at Joan Conover, womanhood become once more to him the old sweet mystery, forever unsolved, the tantalizing *ignis fatuus* of a man's emotional life. Every face must be glanced at on the street; it might be that the supreme one was passing; always searching, soul-hungry, for the breathing replica of the picture stamped upon his soul.

Joan was his supreme one; he had known it from the first; but he had found her too late!

The tremulous shiver of the "Rainbow" music had begun, and she turned toward him for sympathy in her delight. Then followed that apotheosis which returns to the old caressing song of the river nymphs; a few notes more, and it was over.

She blinked, bewildered like a child when the lights came, and laughed almost hysterically from the reaction back into the world of electricity, when he helped her on with her wrap, a very gorgeous thing, ermine-trimmed, of Cloelia's, which she had coaxed Joan into wearing to please her.

"Oh, let us walk home, please, please! It is not far and I want the air. I'm smothered, and I must talk, Mr. Trenly! I've lived a thousand years since dinner. I cannot rest until I tell someone, and Cloelia will be asleep. Do you remember that first talk we had about music in the fields between Cedarhurst and The Oaks? Isn't it strange the way it has all come about that you and I should be here together tonight? Sometimes I think it must be just a lovely dream!"

So they walked back to Mrs. Poyet's, again alone together in the world; and her voice was music to him and sang once more of the "Golden Apples."

VI

"Now, for 'The Valkyrie' you must dress quite differently," ordered Cloelia two days later. "It's everlastingly long between acts, and you see

everybody and everybody sees you, which is lots more to the purpose. I shall never, if I live as long as one of George Washington's three or four hundred nurses, forgive Mr. Trenly for poking you 'way up there—never! And you can tell him I said so! I told him tenth or twelfth row in the orchestra, if we couldn't manage to get hold of a box; and look where you are jingling around among the chandelier ornaments!"

"But he says sound rises; he says—" began Joan.

"Fiddlesticks! Going to the opera is—going to the opera! There's lots more to it than the mere sounds. Anyway, I've written a note to him and told him what he must do tonight, between acts and afterward." Every bone in her body might be found broken, but they'd never break her will, not while the breath of life was in her, she declared to the nurse later on.

And so once more the two went together into a world apart, surcharged with music's potencies. The very opening theme that night gave denotement of the greater psychical depths which soon followed. The duet at the end of the first act with its tumult of passion and ecstasy left Joan intoxicated when the curtain fell. There were hidden places in her nature that the orchestra took possession of, as if by right.

"You look tired, Mr. Trenly," she said when the lights came.

"It's a strain, that act," was all he said, trying to smile and proposing at once to take her down to the foyer, as Cloelia had ordered.

"Oh, no! let us just sit here and tell each other what the music said," cried this matronly ingénue, turning fully toward him all her splendid beauty, that had at once focused glasses upon her.

"What it said to me was so foreign to all my former thought that I am bewildered," she murmured; "may I tell you? Well, while those two were singing their souls out to each other there in the firelight and then the moonlight, suddenly there came to me an understanding of what I've read

about all my life, but had concluded was only a piece of hoary old stage property, like sheet-iron thunder. I never really believed much in it till now. Oh, music has the vocabulary! I mean what they all write about in their different ways—the instantaneous, unsought, unlicensed, overwhelming love of a man for a woman, a woman for a man. There was a terrible conviction about that music; not one note faltered—it was as logical as mathematics!"

"You—you think such love has its rights?" he said, looking away from her through his opera-glasses.

"Rights, no; but that it exists, that it is a factor in life, that's my revelation tonight. Surely that's enough. Oh, I'll never get back to my little saucer perimeter, Mr. Trenly—Cloelia was right."

"If charity in our judgments of others' weaknesses comes out of knowledge, there's something gained, don't you think, Mrs. Conover? Charity has always seemed to me an old, white-haired woman with a gentle voice and smile and such a kind old hand! Faith and Hope are mere chits of girls—not in her class at all."

The next act is so comfortably objective and full of mere scenic felicities that at its close Joan was quite ready to roam about the opera house. A sudden reckless mood was upon him; these hours out of her life were his—and after that? No deluge of suffering would ever make him regret them.

He liked the attention she attracted wherever she went, and wished from the bottom of his heart that he had the right to be proud of her; not only of her great physical charm of face and figure, but the beauty of her crystalline soul that was stamped upon her eyes and brow and lips.

One small thing that she said when they were once more in their seats waiting for the conductor thrilled him strangely: "I wish Rush cared for music," she sighed; "I would give years of my life if he were a man who loved it as you do." Trenly made no response, comparing it with what she had said

the first night: "It makes me a little homesick for Rush somehow."

He smiled; perhaps she would go a step farther tomorrow night.

The next scene left Joan breathless, trembling and cold with an emotional exaltation such as she had never known. She was sitting with clenched hands, tears running down her face, when the orchestra takes up the several motives of "Fate," "Love's Renunciation," "Eternal Sleep" and "Farewell," and interweaves them in that web of untranslatable allurements. The great red cloak enfolds the sleeping Valkyr, the "Flames" leap higher and higher in a sort of cadenced lullaby, less and less accented; a great peace broods over all. The curtain fell gently like a cloud.

Joan sat hypnotized. Not until he spoke to her did she move, and then she turned toward him a face almost convulsed with feeling and whispered:

"Do not speak to me for a moment, please, please!"

He had a swift realization of the unexplored depths of her nature, to which even she was a stranger in that moment. And again swept over him the sharp regret that her soul was not his to feed and cherish and develop. The small round of her life would soon reclaim her, and he knew better than she every fibre of the limited, shallow nature to which she was forever tied.

"It is terrible, this world of music into which you have brought me, Mr. Trenly," she murmured, as he lifted Cloelia's cloak; "one lives a whole lifetime in an evening. I feel all broken and tired out. I should like to slip away by myself and cry it all out, as we women do, when life gets too strong to struggle with."

"Instead of which Mrs. Poyet has commanded me to take you to a certain café to supper, no matter what hour of the night it might be. She wrote me that if we didn't do exactly as she said she'd crawl to her window and throw herself out! So what's a man to do?"

And so it came to pass that a woman all in white, with an ermine opera-cloak

thrown over the back of her chair, leaned forward on her elbows across a little table and talked long and earnestly with a close-bearded, dark-eyed man opposite, also leaning toward her. Everyone noticed them and had a theory as to their relationship.

"I know, anyhow, what he'd like to be," said the woman in the corner, lorgnetted and frankly curious.

"She's a good woman—so far," said the white-haired man beside her.

One of the effects of the opera was to put all mere convention, the gentle traditions of their lives, into the background, and Joan and Lieutenant Trenly talked to each other across that little table very frankly, soul to soul, for the first time. They got dangerously near to that rarest thing in human intercourse—the truth—during that hour together. They ate their supper—every item of which Cloelia had dictated—in a dream; they knew the rooms were full of men and women in evening dress like themselves, but the dark blue eyes looked into the brown ones across from them, and all else had no reality. She told him the things that she had always longed to tell Rush, only he had always laughed and pinched her cheek and teased her into a pliable silence.

On his part Trenly told her all he dared vaguely to tell of what was fast mounting within his soul. Startled to find themselves almost alone in the restaurant, they sprang to their feet, and finding their sleeping cabman flew home through the silent streets.

He saw her to Mrs. Poyet's floor, and after inserting the key and opening the door for her, said softly:

"May I come in one moment and get a light? I think I'll smoke and walk down to the Bridge."

One shaded lamp shed all the light there was in the drawing-room.

"It's tomorrow night, you know, Mrs. Conover—or really tonight, for it's long after midnight."

"I'm sorry; for it's too much for human nerves," she answered; "there should have been an interval."

"I think so, too." He had found

the matches on the smoker's tray and filled his pocket match-box from it. Then, holding out his hand, he said good night.

"Have you had a happy evening?" he asked, retaining her hand for an instant.

"Ah, so happy!" she murmured.

"So have I," he said abruptly; and then he left, closing the hall door very softly lest Mrs. Poyet's sleep should be broken.

"He's so thoughtful about little tiny things," thought Joan as she put out the lamp.

At that very moment Admiral Sproull awoke from a terrible dream about Joan, in which he heard her calling upon him for help as she drifted out to sea, and he stood upon the beach helpless and saw her go down, far out of his reach.

The next morning Joan slept very late, and found that wonderful things had come to pass in the interval. It seemed a telegram had come from Tom Archibald saying he would be there to luncheon and "preferred steak to chops." Cloelia was in a great state of excitement, and was determined upon holding a *grand lever* in a pale pink tea-gown. The doctor had to be sent for to decide upon so awful a sick-room schism. And coming, he had said: "Of course, why not!" being the only one who knew what was ahead of the imperious creature, lying there unwillingly adjusting herself to helplessness.

And so Joan found her dressed as she had willed, lying on the outside of the bed, her face flushed and excited.

They exchanged their two stories, Joan of the evening before, and Cloelia of that morning's developments. Joan's profound enjoyment of the Ring was as wine to her friend's spirit.

When Tom Archibald came it was decided that he should see her alone for a few minutes, Joan joining them later, as the patient seemed in such an overwrought condition that morning.

"It's only a *petit lever* after all, Mr. Archibald," were her first words to him as the nurse showed him in; then tak-

ing a book she went to the adjoining dressing-room, leaving the door open between.

"It's just the size I like," growled out Archibald, approaching and shaking her left hand very gently; then he sank back into the chair placed for her visitors. "Well, have you been true to me?" he queried, with dancing eyes.

"A Penelope every minute!" she cried, delighted, as she always had been at his methods.

"Our engagement's still on then, for I'm more desperate than ever," he said cheerfully. She could not answer, she was laughing so.

"That's nice all round," he added sepulchral, "because I've come on to marry you. I was in hopes you'd notice all my good clothes! I thought of telegraphing you about the wedding, but it hardly seemed worth while, I was to see you so soon."

"The steak and chop decision was more important, then!" she pouted.

"Digestion is the cellar foundations and whole ground-floor of happiness. That plumb—all goes merrily to the weather-vane."

There was a short pause, during which she came to the conclusion that he was a better-looking man than she had remembered him to be. Then he said very quietly:

"I mean it, my dear. I want you to go back with me to Cedarhurst."

The light was instantly snuffed out of her face, and she turned away her head for a moment, and then said nervously:

"Of course I understand it's just part of the little play we began by the piano my last evening at The Oaks—but— Oh, Mr. Archibald, I can't play it any more! I feel rather pathetic and tired, and just want a— a little kindness from you, and no more jesting, please—not today, at least. Perhaps tomorrow I—"

"Why, sweetheart, it's never been a jest with me; never, even from the first, at the piano." The deep voice was so low it was difficult to understand him.

After a pause she said, her voice sharp with rising excitement: "I want to tell you something! I have told no one yet, nor must you tell, Mr. Archibald—of course you know of my accident—?"

"I am here," was his reply.

"Yes, I knew Joan would write. Well—" She struggled again to raise herself, and again fell back helpless. She began again:

"Mr. Archibald— Oh, Uncle Torm! Uncle Torm! I shall never walk again; never, never in all my life, walk again on my own two feet!" She was crying now, completely broken.

"Yes, I know," he said quietly, handing her her handkerchief, for which she was groping, blind with tears.

"You know?" she cried, facing him.

"Why, yes, I went to see the doctor, of course, before I came to you."

She began then to laugh excitedly.

"And still you keep to our engagement?"

"You said you'd take me after everything else failed, at the cannon's mouth, remember! Why, my dear child, that's where my chance comes in. Don't you see? Do you suppose I would have had a ghost of a chance with a brilliant creature like you if this hadn't happened? Your crown of thorns is my wreath of laurel, dear; don't you understand?"

"I shall be a cripple all my life on crutches," she sobbed.

"Then I'll know always where to find my wife—and that's what few men can say; and you can throw away your crutches—you'll have my two arms."

"I never dreamed that you meant it!"

"Did you ever dream that I didn't mean it? The dream is the thing!" cried he.

"Yes, day-dreams and night-dreams, since I've been lying here—and Uncle Torm?"

"Yes, dear."

"Your telegram crossed one from me. You'll find it when you go home; I—I wanted to see you so!"

His whole-souled roar of laughter

brought the nurse to the door with a frown upon her usually placid face; seeing which Archibald's hand went to his offending mouth and he looked so like a big frightened boy that even she smiled, and Cloelia's laugh was a pleasant thing to hear. A little later Cloelia said wistfully:

"But why? Why? Is it pity that moves you?"

"A little Napoleon of a word moves me, madam, four letters high. Shall I spell it for you? Or will you guess it?"

"I'll try to guess it," she replied very hurriedly.

There was some further talk, and several silences before she finally yielded her trembling left hand to him. He stroked it very gently, kissed it and then left her, and Cloelia knew that the big, tender, unselfish love she had always longed for had at last come into her life.

VII

MEN do not please women by inspiration any more than men play the violin by inspiration; the same hours of practice are as necessary to draw the best response from the taut strings of the one as from the tightly strung sensibilities of the other.

Lieutenant Trenly's habit of thoughtfulness, his little courtesies, his art in smoothing away the endless friction of life in a great city, of doing and saying the one right thing in the one right way, had its roots all over the globe, but the perfect flowering was laid at Joan's feet, and created in her memory a dangerously high standard. Should she ever again be content with the old self-centred insensibility that she had hitherto known? And would he ever be satisfied to so surround any less of a woman after the curtain should finally descend with the Fall of the Gods themselves the last night of their long journey together through the land of pictured sound?

But they had one more evening before that befell, and Archibald dined

with them on the "Siegfried" night. The bewildering announcement of Mrs. Poyet's engagement to him supplied the table-talk when the three sat down together to the hurried dinner, made brief by the early commencement of the opera.

Uncle Tom comically said that Cloelia had so coaxed him that, just to please her, he would decline the vacant seat at the opera and remain at home with her. Awful bore, of course, but the sooner a man's spirit was broken the better!

They had a gay little dinner together. Nothing was said of Cloelia's real condition, and Joan started off with the lightest heart that had yet been hers, knowing that her wilful hostess was not lying alone during the long evening, left only to the nurse's care.

Trenly looked very worn and white, and had acknowledged frankly that he had had little or no sleep, followed by a very busy morning at the navy yard. The Secretary had paid one of his unexpected visits, and that had meant "a lot of scampering about in 'glad rags'; a reception at the admiral's, and all the rest of it," he had weariedly explained.

"Siegfried," the scherzo of Wagner's great symphony, as Lavignac has called it, fell like dew upon Trenly's parched mood, and at first brought to him a great refreshment. Joan recognized with little starts and murmurs of delight the familiar motive that forms the marvelous mosaic of the Ring.

When Siegfried feels the first fret of awakening passion in the second act, and the orchestra tells his mood, his restless gropings after the great mystery, Joan thought: "So life has been from the beginning—there's a woman sleeping somewhere, waiting for the coming of the one man destined to awaken her!"

She turned toward her companion and their eyes met in the dark, electrically, and they felt that they were sharing one thought—only hers was impersonal, unrelated.

"Don't you think everyone has a

little bird singing sometimes in his life, just above out of sight, leading on and on through the forest?" she queried sadly, when the curtain fell.

"Yes, and it leads more than one man through a ring of flames, too!" he answered.

"My little bird tonight is articulate, and it sings: 'Go home, Joan Conover, Patty wants you, and the boys; you have wandered far enough—go home, go home, before the poison of pleasure steals all your silly senses!'"

It was her words and the swift realization that it would soon all come to an end, and she would go out of his life forever, that touched the man's brain, during the last tumultuous act, with a sudden madness.

Siegfried had sung his radiant "Hail to Love" after the "Awakening," and the duet had commenced which ends in the superb stretto of "The Decision to Love." Joan felt a strain on her skirt and automatically, wrapped body and soul in the music's enchantment, put her hand down to readjust her draperies. And in an instant was precipitated one of those things that leave scars on human lives. In his suffering and despair he had slipped his hand down in the dark and was sitting there holding a bit of her soft crêpe dress. He meant that she should never know; he meant to carry it through as he had begun; he meant that she should go untouched by the fire that was consuming him. And then by that chance her hand touched his and his fingers closed over it with a grasp that was like iron. He knew absolutely that she had not lowered her hand expecting to find his there; he knew the spotless purity of her soul, the perfection of her breeding; but he had reached, through the music, through sleepless nights, through days of tremendous struggling, an apotheosis of his own with many motives interlacing, and he, too, would shout "The Decision to Love," come what may!

She started violently, and struggled at once to withdraw her hand. She looked quickly behind her thinking that there was some mistake somehow in

the dark. The hand still held hers as in a vise. She started to rise and someone hissed sharply behind her. She sank down again overwhelmed, and in that moment she understood! Their two pulses beat together, bounding along like two dogs running madly in a double leash; all of her senses were merged in that one sensation of vibrating flame burning away her right hand to the bone. With bowed head, her whole being one great heart-throb, she sat waiting, straining away from him, helpless, humiliated; waiting through the final cadences. The last chords died away, the curtain came, and then the lights; and then only did he release her hand—his face as white as death.

Trembling so that she could scarcely stand, she arose and threw on her cloak before he could touch it.

"Take me to the carriage!" she ordered imperiously, all the old sweetness gone from her voice, as she swept past him in the aisle, with her head held high.

"I love you," he whispered as she passed him.

Once her long dress caught and she stooped to free herself; again, with a curious heartbroken monotony he repeated:

"I love you, that's all! I love you!"

With a sob she hurried on down the stairs.

"Find the carriage and then leave me," she said at the door, not looking at him.

"I shall see you home; you are in my care."

"Your care!" She laughed bitterly.

"Do you suppose only a saint sees all round a sin, Joan Conover?" he said harshly. "There never was a burglar creeping in the night but pictured himself hanged for murder!"

She would not suffer his proximity, however brief, in the carriage; he would not allow her to go alone; so with voices and eyes at dagger's draw they stood a moment on the sidewalk in one of those sudden human battles that are so pitiful and come alike to those who love and those who hate.

"Then I shall walk!" she cried.

"As you wish. But you are not dressed for it; you are——"

"Oh, what difference does it make! What difference does anything make now!"

So on they went beside each other, through the blaze and rush about the opera house, and then out into the quiet streets beyond. Now and then she stumbled in her haste, shrinking from him, when instinctively his hand went out to her aid.

"Do not touch me!" she panted. With a hard cynicism in his voice, new to her, he said:

"In this century people are kind to the insane, and I've gone mad tonight—you ought to be gentle with me, and not take the attitude of the fifteenth century, when they treated madness as a crime."

"Rush!" she sobbed.

"Oh, yes, by all means let's talk of Lieutenant Rush Conover!" he broke out, and then there was enough sanity left in his blood to save him from a last ignominy, and he stopped himself upon the brink.

Presently he began to laugh.

"Mrs. Poyet has had her runaway and now you are in the midst of one. There are runaways and smash-ups among men and women—and the complacent theories of a lifetime go to splinters in five seconds! I rather like it myself, after holding in till my wrists ache!"

"Mr. Trenly, you are not yourself tonight. I beg——"

"I'm very much myself tonight!" he cried defiantly. Then he poured out his soul in a torrent of words, and she flew on beside him, deaf and dumb from excess of emotion. Finally the mere relief of words brought reaction, and after a pause he cried brokenly:

"What have I done? Tell me, Mrs. Conover; tell me I have not spoiled your pleasure. The music will stay with you, will it not? Nothing will take that away, of course. And the memory will remain with you? Tell me, please tell me, that the beauty of it all will stay with you!"

"My silvery peace has gone!" she

whispered, her eyes straining on ahead. "It will not come again while I live!"

"You must not say that to me!" he cried in anguish—"that I should have been the one to destroy it!"

"Cloelia trusted you, I trusted you——" she began.

"Good God, child, I trusted myself! That's the real tragedy."

Joan swept into the entrance hall of the apartment house, he holding the door open for her. They went past the little reception-room to the elevator; he rang the bell and then they stood waiting until it descended.

"Mrs. Conover, will you let me go up with you for a moment? I cannot leave you like this. I will not! To fall asunder like this after those happy nights in dreamland together! I will not say one word to offend you; just give me one chance to step up again upon the level of my life—the level; please try and think that. You know in your heart—we have been too near each other—that I speak the truth."

Was it because she was going to yield to his entreaty that she stood staring ahead in silence? Or was it because she was too bewildered, too heartsick even to comprehend what he was saying? It will never be known, for a voice beside them said:

"At last! Well, Mrs. Conover, how do you do? And Trenly, too; good evening. This is delightful! I've been waiting a couple of months for you in that wretched little pale green reception-room. Why are so many reception-rooms done in a pale, melancholy green? Ever noticed it? The opera was long tonight!"

And there stood Admiral Sproull, in all the splendor of evening clothes, his lips smiling, his voice blithe and commonplace, his eyes sad with what he had seen in those two young faces as they passed the reception-room. He knew at a glance that Joan had indeed a great need of him.

"The children! are they ill?" cried she, clinging to his hand, unaware that she had not greeted him, as Trenly had done at once with perfect self-control in voice and manner.

"They're all right, madam, with cheeks, I assure you, like Northern Spy apples. I came on to New York on a little insurance matter. By the bye, Trenly, I'd like your advice about that."

"Take me home, please; take me home with you when you go!" cried Joan.

"Well, now you pin me down, Mrs. Conover, that's really what I came on for," he said, laughing to cover her exigency. "I have a special predilection for traveling with a pretty young woman in my care. I pretend to myself—oh, all sorts of things, eh, Trenly?"

The elevator was waiting, the door open, and turning to the young officer the admiral said in that tone that had so long impelled obedience:

"Trenly, wait for me here in that little green room, will you? We'll walk downtown together. I'll see Mrs. Conover up to her floor. I'll find you here when I return?"

"Certainly, sir."

In the elevator Joan closed her eyes and leaned back against the iron lattice.

"Take me home!" she whispered.

"I'll take you home, my dear," he said very gently. After one glance at her face he changed his mind and followed her to Mrs. Poyet's drawing-room. Throwing off her cloak, Joan started to speak excitedly, incoherently. Before she had finished the first wild sentence he said gravely:

"Will you listen to me a moment? I do not wish to know what is troubling you; I mean I do not think it wise for you to tell me. I am an old man; I know life pretty well, I think. Moreover, before I leave you, I want you to promise me that never, as long as you live, will you repeat to anyone—one, remember!—what you were about to tell me just now in your excitement."

"But I must speak—to be silent is to acquiesce."

"Very far from it, my child. You are silent and wise in matters connected with your children's lives and discipline; be silent and wise in all the

other phases of your womanhood—as a wife, as a friend."

"It is sheltering evil!" she protested, amazed at his tone.

"Evil? Ah, my dear, my dear! Evil is the shadow of life, and it is largely when what it covers is brought out into the sunlight of speech that it begins to breed—well, scandal among other things. Half the social crimes would cease if women, and men, too, buried the other half in silence. The sun purifies, yes, but it germinates, too. Let my experience count for you in this matter, and control that hysterical desire you have to confess—it belongs to a past age. Words give immortality to some thoughts that had better die at the birth. Do I seem harsh? Some day you will understand, I think. Tonight you are all tired out, poor little girl—most natural thing in the world! Tomorrow we'll take the Congressional Express; how will that suit you? It will be nice to see Patty again, and the boys! Can't you hear that Con talk? Just go to sleep thinking of that, and tomorrow we'll go home. I read somewhere once, Mrs. Conover, that 'the path of a good woman is indeed strewn with flowers; but they rise behind her steps, *not* before them.' Good night, and God keep you! I'll come in the morning."

VIII

"THANK you, Trenly, for waiting for me," said the admiral cheerfully at the door of the reception-room.

"Great pleasure, I'm sure," murmured the lieutenant, from long habit; his fury at this interruption and detention completely hidden—so he thought.

"Were you ever so astonished in your life as at the Poyet-Archibald engagement?" quoth Sproull, walking briskly down the street beside the other. "She had retired when I called about nine o'clock. I saw the nurse; she said the happy man had just gone after a chat with the Lady Poyet. Then the woman told me where Mrs.

Conover and you were; so I came back later on and waited. Such a joy to get once more into a city where nobody ever goes to bed or even thinks of it."

The admiral did most of the talking as they walked down Fifth avenue. At a hotel entrance he stopped and asked Trenly to go in and have some "navy sherry" with him.

"Not tonight, thank you, admiral," began the other; then suddenly the terror of being alone with his regrets swept over him and he cried, "Yes, I will, too—if you'll pardon my taking it back."

"Let's have it upstairs," suggested Sproull. The dark eyes of the young officer darted a suspicious glance at his companion; but a more innocent, cheerful, kindly old gentleman in a loquacious mood he never remembered having seen.

"In my room," chatted on the old officer, "there are two armchairs, and I vow they are both so confoundedly comfortable that I couldn't read the evening paper for hopping up and trying the other one, for fear I should be losing something!"

Going up to the admiral's rooms, Yunosuke was found poking at the open fire. He turned and made that series of quick, profound bows from the waist that differentiates the Japanese greeting from all others, and he smiled broadly as he recognized Lieutenant Trenly.

Taking the admiral's coat and hat and gloves, Yunosuke started to relieve the younger man of his; but he demurred.

The admiral was lighting his cigar, and when the delicate process was finished to his entire satisfaction, he said stiffly:

"You make hospitality a little difficult, Mr. Trenly."

With a quick movement and word of apology the young officer threw off his coat and helped himself to the Scotch whisky and soda handed him by the admiral's "boy," and, still standing, he drank it off eagerly.

"Now, Yunosuke, open that win-

dow about four inches at the top, and then that's all tonight; thank you, and good night."

The "boy" bowed to each man separately, did as he was told, and slipped noiselessly out of that room to his own, where he sat half the night digging his way through Dante with the quiet persistence and yet propelling enthusiasm that mark the nation.

"Will you smoke?" asked Admiral Sproull. "Here's a Newton Perlas that will not take twenty minutes, since you seem to keep Brooklyn hours."

"Thank you, I think I will not smoke, admiral." Was it possible, Trenly wondered, that those keen old eyes had failed to gather the meaning in Mrs. Conover's face and in her unnerved cry at seeing him? Would the admiral have been so cordial if he had caught the drift of that scene?

"Poor Mrs. Conover looked all worn out; I'm afraid she's been doing too much. Music plays the very deuce with nerves, anyhow. The great Russian was about right in his Sonata story. Lord! I know all about it. The comfort about old age is that one is beyond the shock of surprise."

Trenly could not talk; he still stood holding his empty glass, looking blankly at the fire. He started when Sproull said abruptly:

"Will you do me a favor, Mr. Trenly?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Meet me halfway!" cried the admiral.

The lieutenant turned slowly and looked into the other man's eyes and—understood. Sinking back into his chair his eyes traveled back to the fire and he waited, every nerve strung for the blow he felt was coming. And so the words that followed, uttered with the utmost gentleness, amazed him:

"Man alive, Trenly! do you suppose I'm so old that I'm dead to what you are suffering? That I have no sympathy with you, that it's all for that dear, innocent, beautiful child? A wiser and more initiated woman might have saved herself and you some suffering. Sympathy, I've found, is gen-

erally withheld from those most in need of it. The one who does wrong needs it a damned sight more than the one who is wronged—half the time, we'll say. We men are such good actors that, to put it plainly, women do not help us much, do they, Trenly? in—well, this sort of thing. They don't seem to realize their power—except the devils among them. And yet, after all, the best thing on earth is a good woman; it is her standards—narrow as they are—that make human society possible."

The admiral walked to the fireplace and stood facing it, his legs apart, his back to the other man.

"I heard a story once," said the old officer dreamily, "thirty years ago, that is in point with what we happen to be discussing tonight. Once years ago—about the time you were in knickerbockers—there was a very beautiful woman, almost as lovely as Mrs. Conover, only with a different soul. She married a young ensign in the Navy. Her husband worshiped her. It satisfied her for awhile, and then came his second three years' cruise—no broken cruises in those days, Trenly, you'd better believe! She remained at home; he did not believe in women following ships about. They had no children. She met a man, a civilian—not a brother officer." Trenly stirred in his seat, his head bowed low, supported by his hand. The other continued:

"All this hasn't seen the light of day for so long that I have to grope a little to find it in my memory. Seduction is easy—terribly easy, sometimes—scarcely worth a gentleman's while—and yet he was a gentleman, that man; and when the officer returned from sea he found his wife gone."

There was another pause; the admiral's cigar was out and he was slow about relighting it.

"I suppose all of us have felt at one time or another these strange psychic affinities with forbidden things. Heaven help us! I have, a dozen times. But a so-called love like that is never a real thing. It's that other thing we

need not name. The real thing protects a woman from a man's self—from herself, if it's necessary. There's a time when it is possible, no matter how strong the forces are within two human souls; but after that—the whirlwind! And so, I suppose, it was with those two who ruined my—my friend's life. By the bye, Trenly, do you care to hear the rest of it?"

"Yes, sir."

"As I recall the story, the husband never saw her again. Whether dead, or worse than dead, he got no news of her—of either of them. There was some rumor from Budapest once, I believe; just enough to know she had gone under. Some women survive such things and live them down; some go under. His wife went under; down where lie white skulls on which the fair hair was once soft to the touch and hollow sockets stare blankly where the sweet blue eyes laughed—"

"Admiral!" broke in Trenly, bringing his fist down upon the table in sudden violence.

"Eh? Oh, yes, I beg your pardon; I forgot where I was for a moment. I suppose I'm getting old, for I'm beginning to like to hear myself talk."

The old officer went back to his chair, and as he passed the younger man he laid his hand a moment upon his shoulder.

"Will you join me?" Sproull then asked, standing beside the table and adding the carbonated water from the siphon very slowly to his finger of whisky.

"No more tonight," murmured Trenly.

"Well, here's to the good women in the world," said the old man, raising his glass, "whom it behooves the wise man to preserve as he would his power to see the sun in the heavens above him."

There was a long silence, and then the admiral added:

"We men don't know much about each other's lives really, so it's safer to be kind in our judgments, don't you think so, Trenly?"

The other got to his feet blindly,

seized his overcoat and hat, and started for the door. Then he stopped, cleared his throat and said rapidly:

"I can't talk, admiral! I can't say a word more than—I thank you." He opened the door, closed it again and added: "I know now why every man, from the galleys to the bridge, who has ever served with you was ready to die for you! Good night, sir."

The old officer sat alone by the dying fire, with bowed head staring into the still glowing embers of his own past, a half-smoked cigar between his fingers.

IX

SPRING had again come around at The Oaks, with its old, sweet procession of flowers, filing along in accordance with the vegetable laws: hepatica, anemone, blood-root, trailing arbutus, the "May queen" of all. The dandelions were already going to seed—first sad little whisper that gray death awaited everything in that newly resurrected world of joyous springtime.

Rush Conover's ship had been ordered home, her three years' cruise at an end. She had sailed from Gibraltar and was slowly steaming toward what the sailor calls "God's own country," with all the assurance of a man who considers that he is in a position to know, having seen all others.

Mrs. Pattison had written from the Black Forest to her brother, congratulating him upon his engagement, and turning Cedarhurst over to him indefinitely. She should never return, she added; she had found "*ein Arzt des Natur*," who had diagnosed her condition with a mirror, and the spectrum lines showed conclusively that she had not long to live. She had a *thrombus*! He was using electricity, but had no hope whatever. It was hardly worth while to return; she had arranged with the American consul for her burial. Tom would doubtless be glad to know that the hotel she was in had uncommonly comfortable beds for Germany. Her detailed wishes and

farewells followed—as indeed they did at intervals for several years, from all over sanatory Europe. In a post-script she said she had made her will before leaving home, and Brother Tom had everything. "If Sister Hester does not choose to sell the land, she can continue to take boarders and shame an honorable pedigree by her extraordinary parsimony."

This last bold statement Tom vowed should never meet his older sister's eyes.

The two adjoining estates had been of late grossly neglected by their overseer, who vibrated disconcertingly between Cedarhurst and a certain cozy apartment in New York. The letters of this pair of fantastic lovers, their telegrams, their squabbles, their inextinguishable nonsense, were a source of joy to all who knew them.

Noticing one day a marked return of the old melancholy in one of Cloelia's letters, Archibald sent a special-delivery letter to this effect:

Suspend all wedding preparations at once! I forgot to say that under no circumstances will I harbor, or protect, or allow any wife of mine to pay her own bills under my roof, if she—mark well my words—if she puts mustard in a mayonnaise! Wire at once. The suspense is terrible. If favorable, continue with trousseau, as before.

And then when, to his dismay, no answer came day after day, he told Joan his trouble. As a result, he took the night train for New York.

The next morning Joan received a telegram:

Just a ruse to see me. Mustard question O. K. Thank God!

UNCLE TOM.

It proved to be his last trip, for that very April day Mrs. Poyet was to arrive with her doctor and her two nurses, and she was to stay at The Oaks, where the drawing-room had been turned into a bedroom for her—which goes to show the effect of a love affair upon even such a white-haired, stiff-necked old spinster as Miss Hester, who hated change as few do the devil.

Archibald had not yet brought about Cloelia's final acceptance of what she called the sacrifice of tying him for life

to a cripple; but he nursed private notions of his speedy success, once get her where he could set a daily snare.

Joan had been busy all the early morning decorating the house, with Yunosuke's artistic aid, for Cloelia's welcome. Everything was full of blossoms but the George II coffee-pot, and that escaped only because Miss Hester, with almost a giddy laugh, locked it up.

Joan had moved her work-table that morning for the first time out under the oaks, not far from the Judas trees, and she was sitting there, her tired hands in her lap, her eyes looking out over the rolling hills.

Admiral Sproull was taking his belated exercise, tramping like a sentinel back and forth between the budding rosebush and the blossoming quince. Every now and then he glanced sideways at Joan's fair face and shook his head, frowning.

Waffles, with drooping ears, followed heartbrokenly at the old naval officer's heels. That his master did this sort of thing once on a time on the poop-deck of a ship he understood perfectly, but here ashore, with fifty voices calling from the woods and fields, it was not to be comprehended!

When the retired Commander-in-Chief stopped and took in the peaceful horizon, Waffles whined coaxingly, with one ear cocked up, hopeful to the bitter end.

Beautiful as ever, but also curiously changed was Joan Conover's face. The eyes held a new wistfulness, the soft lips were more tightly closed. The soul of the woman looked out through a thinner veiling of the flesh. There was no defined regret, only vague, formless visions that filled the heavens and the earth, and crouched beside her even in her sleep. Sometimes she seemed adrift upon that great sea of music that she had once crossed, and she was never alone, and the voice and the hand beside her said and did the one right thing, always.

But Rush was coming! In a few days the word "Come" would fly to her over the wires, and going she would

forget all else but the habit of her life's love, and the old joy would return to her now often lonely heart. Other wives of the returning officers had already flown from all over the land and were waiting in New York hotels and boarding-houses for their lords, to give them greeting. Joan knew it all so well; those strangely happy reunions in the Navy, that keep alive long past middle age the romance and thrill of youth. The wife sitting waiting, with flowers about, and dressed in her bridal best, listening with a full heart, fighting back the tears from sheer womanly vanity; the knock that always seems so sudden when it does come; the hallboy's voice, unctuous with interest: "This is her room, sir. Thank you, sir!" The door opens wide and is closed, one quick look between eyes that have not met for years. The man says nothing but stands with outstretched arms, the woman makes the low moan of long repression, and flies to him, and the two heads, albeit gray and in their fifties, are close together and there is a long silence before tears and laughter bring relief to both.

Joan knew it all so well; knew that she would run to him with the old cry, "Rush!" and forget all else once in his arms.

The sixtieth turn ended the admiral's constitutional, and as he stood a moment to see that the horizon contained no surprises, he thought to himself, "One more talk I'll have, as sure as I'm alive! And that's with Lieutenant Conover when he comes. He shall not escape everything; he shall be made to value that wife of his, over there, and feel the responsibility of her great beauty of soul and body. Good shall come out of all this, else there is no purpose in the struggle."

A moment later he stood beside her and said, his voice full of cheery tenderness:

"Well, we've got the very best of it, haven't we, my child?"

"The best?" she wondered, her great eyes lifted to his, still dreaming.

"Why, yes, a fresh spring morning undefiled; the happy voices of your lit-

tle ones at their play, a sound body, a sound mind and a clear conscience. Some day you'll be preaching it to Roy—you'll see!"

And then the postman came across the lawn toward them, handed Mrs. Conover several letters and a telegram and the admiral his morning paper, which arrived leisurely at The Oaks.

He was soon screened within its folds, smilingly sure of Joan's telegram and bent on sparing her happy blushes that flew to her face at bare sight of the yellow envelope.

Ripping it open, she read:

Ship arrived last night. Am well. Await letter mailed on arrival. Letter explains. Sorry.

Then she slowly opened his special-delivery letter, which had come with the telegram, and read how, at the last moment in Venice, he had thought best to avail himself of the greatly reduced cost of gold lace over there and had had it renewed on all of his uniforms, and so he was arriving dreadfully strapped for money and awfully cut up about it, full of regrets that the everlasting question of expense should come between their happiness, but forgetting to regret his special inadvertence. If she had any little fund saved up, for heaven's sake come on at once; he was simply wild to see her, etc., etc.

She did not finish it, but sat stunned, staring down at her trembling fingers as they folded her letter and replaced it in the cover. She had spent her very little all in getting ready to go to him; she had been so happy and so busy over all the dainty details of toilet with which she had so long planned to surprise and please that gay, light-minded husband of hers. She had sewed her wifehood securely into every piece of raiment that was lying ready in her room for the dear command. She had for weeks been longing, as she never had before, for it to come and end those floating dreams that filled her brain. And this was the end!

"The ship's in!" exclaimed the admiral from behind the paper.

"Yes," said Joan, and the tremor in her voice sounded like a laugh in the

old man's loving ears. She sat chilled to the blood in her veins. She had never been so in need of her husband, and so it happened that his letter was the key that is always so small a thing compared with what it unlocks.

At first the tide of disillusion came about her in a lapping wavelet, running back faster than it approached. Then higher and higher it dashed about her, receding and leaving white things like bones at her feet! A flash of intense resentment ran through her; then an overwhelming humiliation that he who alone owned the privilege of saying "Come" to her held it so lightly. She had a strong, quick sense of disproportion between her effort to meet her husband pure in thought and deed—an effort of which she was suddenly aware—and his real need of her in his life.

Conover's letter, full of a little more of self than usual, contained a dynamic force of which he remained unaware all his life.

The old man on the other side of that newspaper, hugging himself for a diplomat, might once have helped her in some indirect way, but he had taught her a lesson in silence once for which she had since been grateful. Above all things she now dreaded his next question.

Watching the paper in an agony of fear Joan slipped gently from her chair and fled over the soft grass.

No one should witness her fresh agony and shame at the selling of her wifehood for a bit of gold in the marketplace, before all eyes!

For the first time she saw her husband as he really was, and she ran like a mad thing down the lane between the hedges.

The unrelated elements in her mental life, during all that winter and spring, suddenly crystallized, and she knew in a flash why this tragedy had sprung up out of so familiar a thing as Rush's thoughtlessness and dearth of sentiment.

As she ran past the great haystack, Waffles assumed noisily that he was necessary to the full enjoyment of a

walk, but she turned upon him and sent him back in a sudden fury that left her trembling and ashamed. She was in terror lest the children should discover her, before the tumult within her was spent.

She ran past the sleepy old barn where the peaceful fowls were happily scratching and cackling out their tiny, soulless round of self-centred life. Joan's face was white and drawn and old, as she almost ran the entire length of the "mushroom meadow," seeking the shelter of the woods below.

There was a great boulder that she knew, worn by ancient waters into a sort of huge armchair. She had often sat in it and watched the flying clouds with upturned face. Breathless from her run to cover, she walked more slowly till she found the rock; and before it the little brook that was all that remained of the surging waters that had fashioned her boulder into the seat, upon which she threw herself with almost a sob of relief. Her hatless head thrown back, her eyes closed, her arms stretched out their farthest on either side, she lay for a long time, slow, difficult tears running unchecked down her face. The light pink gingham dress that she wore was almost luminous against the gray, sun-flooded rock.

It was a long time before the reaction came, and she opened her eyes and watched the few fleecy ribbons of ever-changing clouds above her. Change! That was the solution. The endless flexibility of human character, human relations, conditions, influences.

She would soon readjust herself to the cruel illumination that had come upon her with such strange suddenness; she doubtless exaggerated as one does a first impression. Even the deep wound to her pride, to her womanliness that had been slighted, would heal in time. She would trust to the law of change that governed all created things, from the rock beneath her to the fast encroaching heads of her two boys, which she had watched growing to her knee, to her waist, and

were now fast climbing to her shoulder; and then it would be her eyes, her forehead, and then—oh, then she would have lost her boys! She smiled and moved her head, and suddenly the smile fled, for there, standing before her with his hat in his hand, his head lowered in an attitude of humility and worship, stood Trenly.

She sprang erect and sat staring, panting, wordless. All else in her life slipped away from her in a great flood of feeling that took possession of her.

"I—I hope you will pardon me," he said gravely. "I was getting out of the trolley as you crossed the meadow. I saw your bright dress and I followed you."

His whole bearing toward her, the sad monotony of his voice, the change in his thin, worn face, the very fatality of his coming at that moment disarmed her, and she sank slowly back into her seat, vaguely wondering how long he had been watching her, hoping that he had missed the significance of the abandon of her tragic figure when she had first thrown herself upon the rock. Later she had smiled; she hoped he had come then, in time to see that! She watched his face, trying to read there the truth; and his eyes looked, too, and told him much more quickly the truth. That was not a happy wife waiting for her husband's fast approaching return, after three years of waiting. That was not the Joan he had first met at The Oaks. The old admiral's life story had not been lost upon him, and he had come full of an honest dread of something that he feared to formulate even to himself; never until that morning having even dreamed that he had touched so much as the outer rim of her peace. After one glance he was awe-stricken at the change in her, and he turned from the possible cause of it all, in unspeakable terror.

"You must have got my letter. I told you I was coming," he said.

"Why, no! Oh, yes, some letters came awhile ago, but I did not even read the envelopes. They are on my work-table."

The dark blood ran to his face; he smiled grimly to think that a moment ago he had been fool enough to fear that he had somehow been connected with the great change that had come over her in face and manner.

She knew that she had missed her cue, that she should have told him to go away at once. Yesterday she would have done so—perhaps; today she could not, would not. Today there were no automatic impulses, dating back to her foremothers, to come to her aid. Today it was to be a hand-to-hand affair, concentrated within the close ring of her own generation, her own character. She sat for a moment looking away from him, in silence, with dilated eyes.

"The ship has come!" she murmured breathlessly, thrusting it between them like a shield.

"Yes; I took breakfast aboard this morning and saw them all."

"Rush?"

"Yes."

"Is—is he looking well? He claims it in his despatch," she said, and could have struck herself that she could not force her voice and face to convey the old interest.

"Very well indeed. I may as well be honest. I came because I had seen him and knew you were here alone, and it was my last chance!"

She spoke hastily, ignoring his purposes and full of her own, to defeat those keen, searching eyes.

"We could not manage it, this time. I mean, my going to him, as we would have wished. I—I have been a little extravagant—the pinch had to come." Her husband's faults were her own to hide from all eyes.

"Mrs. Conover, that you have been good enough to speak to me at all encourages me to say what I came to say. May I sit down?" The fact that he asked won the woman's quick "yes," and the courteous motion of her hand toward a detached fragment of rock a few feet away.

"I came because I must hear your forgiveness of last winter's brutality before I can forget it, forgive myself,

live it down and go on. It is destroying me, the love and the self-loathing; and the fear that I had hurt your 'silvery peace,' as you called it—remember?"

He smiled, and she forgot and smiled, too.

"You received my wild letters? I have sent you several."

"I received them, yes."

"I did not know."

"They needed no answer—deserved none."

"Why, then, do you receive me like this today? I do not understand," he queried sharply.

She paused before she answered, speaking slowly, carefully:

"You came! There was no envelope to be opened at one's will. And then, Mr. Trenly, I have come, very slowly, to understand many things."

"Then no harm has come to you through my madness? I could not stand that. I'll fight it out somehow—but you—I tell you I could not stand that!"

And then she realized more than ever that he must not know the truth. She saw that she must act a little part, for his peace of mind, and send him on his way. The long training of her unselfish wifehood and motherhood gave her strength to say quietly:

"No, you have not harmed me."

"You are sure?" he demanded, again recalling that strange attitude he had found her in, before she had moved and smiled.

She frowned at his persistence and turned her head that he should not see her fast filling eyes.

"Perfectly sure," she said coldly.

"I wish you would let me speak frankly—just this once!" he cried suddenly. Her silence gave him the permission.

"When I saw Conover this morning I assumed that you had joined him. When he said not there was a look in his eyes I could not understand. I knew at once that you must be either ill or unhappy—something was wrong—so I came immediately to see if I

could help you. Can I? Is it anything that you can tell me? Is it some ridiculous nonsense about money? Or—is it something down deep in your soul that I have no right to hear? Tell me, dear, is it about Rush? You *must* be happy—it is my religion nowadays—just to keep you happy at any cost. I came to find a great change in you, in your face, your voice—something is wrong with you! I will do anything in human power to see that old look of joy in the sweet eyes; I will—”

“Yes, yes!” she cried breathlessly, “it is about Rush! I am so disappointed about not being able to go on—you can understand that?” She laughed excitedly.

“Yes.”

“Well, you see, I know the other wives are all there—it has made me blue, sensitive, perhaps jealous. It is all rather absurd, is it not?” She spoke rapidly, her eyes running from one object to another—and she wished she had sent him away at once.

“That does not sound like the truth. There is nothing in your soul as small as that!” he cried.

“I am telling you the—” She struggled for an instant to finish, and then was swept off her feet by the tremendous undertow of her own passionate nature, and she sprang up crying:

“Oh, go from me! Go at once. I cannot keep it up. I would have spared you, but you would not let me, you would not believe. Now you shall hear. I alone am not to be punished! It’s all a lie—every word I’ve said to you. In the old days I would have laughed because a little money kept me waiting for Rush: laughed, because I laughed at everything, before you came and murdered my peace, my dear, sweet, sunny life that saw no evil anywhere, that believed, that had faith in all things! It has gone forever, and my happiness has gone, too!”

“Joan!” he groaned with buried eyes, lest he see the suffering in her face.

“Why could you not have left me in my blindness, in my great, foolish joy of living in my simple way? I tell you

my eyes are open, wide; I see—I see many things, and I’ve got to go on!”

He got up and went to her, and tried to take one of her outstretched hands. But she swept him away from her with a gesture not without a certain grandeur; and stood, her colorless face, stern and impersonal, turned up to where the rift in the branches showed The Oaks framed in the great trees. He never had felt further from her than now that she had told him that she loved him. It seemed to him with any other woman on earth he would have known how to turn all this pain into pleasure; but not with her. There were plenty of others—there was just one Joan, and he adored her inaccessibility.

And yet, somehow, even then he found the right thing to say to her:

“I do not want you to do any wrong, not the least wrong while you live, dear. I want you—in my soul I want you—to be as you are—always.”

“That is what I longed to hear you say—just those words!” she sobbed, breaking down completely at last, sinking back into her seat, her proud, beautiful head hidden in her arms.

Once she spoke, brokenly:

“You will see that no harm comes to me through you—it shall be your trust—what I give you to do for me.”

“No harm shall come to you, dear,” he repeated solemnly.

Then, when she got a little more quiet, and was able to look at him with eyes as flowerlike as Patty’s own, he said very gently:

“Do you know that men almost always treat women exactly as in their hearts they really wish to be treated? We don’t monopolize all the wickedness in the world!” And it was a great joy to him to see a little smile run over her tired face as she said quietly:

“It will be a comfort to think sometimes that a scrap of the very best that is in you is mine. That can do no harm, can it?”

He could not answer.

When she spoke the great motherliness of her voice sank into his troubled heart and quieted him:

“I spoke harshly a moment ago. I

am very sorry. It is not all your fault that my heart drifted from its moorings, although you did create the storm. I am not quite so small that I do not see it clearly. It had to come some day—the awakening. Will you try to believe me when I say it is not all a loss? because we will not allow it to be a loss! Because we are going to do right, you and I. Perhaps you think I do not know what is on the other side; but I know—the music told me!"

She smiled up at him with trembling

lips, and eyes running over. He sank suddenly upon his knees beside her, and laid his head where hers had been upon the rock.

Presently she lifted one hand and placed it upon his dark head. It was not a caress, but a benediction—and he understood.

And so they parted; and as he turned away and went down through the woods, she looked up for strength to go on, and saw the children coming down toward her over the sunny meadows.



THE WOOD GIPSY

IN scarlet skirt and bodice gay,
A bold-lipped, tawny thing,
Comes brown October down the wood,
A gipsy wandering.

Her light limbs shame the leopard's lithe
Abandonment of grace,
Her dark eyes prison all the old
Wild passion of her race.

Crooning, she lifts her voice in song,
Some strain of weird romance,
And timed to clashing tambour bells,
Whirls in a wanton dance.

And ere the cadence dies away
In echoes wild and sweet,
The oaks and maples shower gold
About her twinkling feet!

HILTON R. GREER.



KNEW THE WORST

KEEPER OF THE GATES—Aren't you afraid of what the Recording Angel's book may show?

SPIRIT—No; on earth I had a candid friend.

THE LADY OF MOODS

By Gouverneur Morris

"Heart of my heart, she has broken
the heart of me;
Soul of my soul, she will never
be part of me—
She whom I love, but will
never be love of me,
Song of my Sorrows—
My Lady of Moods."

MICHAEL'S death, in the season when his promise was being fulfilled, was a shocking loss to us who loved him; and a ten days' wonder. In a land of plenty, with money in his purse, a friend by his side, and the earnestness of an unparalleled success pouring in by every mail, the man to whose robust body and vitality there seemed to cling a suggestion of immortality had died of what the doctor in attendance declared to have been physical exhaustion.

The scene of Michael's death, and of his lonely burying, the Hill station of Nuwara Elya in Ceylon, was so far removed from the obliterating roar and change of New York that we, who were most interested and affected, despaired of receiving those particulars with which it is the touching custom of a man's friends to busy their minds on the melancholy occasion of his dying. It was idle to speculate, and the tragedy, by degrees, fell away from thought and talk. But it was not one of those visitations which can be wholly forgotten, and when it was learned that Prince Laniaski, of Warsaw, Michael's companion in Ceylon, had landed in America, there was a general reviving of interest.

Prince Laniaski is a long, emaciated man, with the lofty forehead, the ivory-yellow coloring and the Virgilian profile of the early Florentine poets. He

has singularly deep-set, light gray eyes and the poise of an Oriental. In speaking English it is by deliberateness and not accent or construction that he distinguishes himself a foreigner.

"Michael," he began suddenly, and breaking off abruptly an entirely different topic, "died of physical exhaustion brought on by a broken heart."

I recalled everything I knew about Michael, which was much, and could not find any grounds for entertaining such a theory. There were plenty of vivacious flirtations to which I could have sworn, and with equal readiness I could have taken oath that in and about his native city, and in all my long and intimate knowledge of him, he had never been drawn by a serious inclination toward any woman. All this passed into my mind.

Laniaski looked at me steadily as if I had spoken aloud and immediately answered my skepticism.

"You are quite mistaken," he said. "At once well known and quite unknown to his familiar friends, there was a woman—a young girl—here in the very midst of you, who brought this thing upon him."

"I cannot think who," I said.

"Do you know a—Mrs. Jolyff?" he asked.

"Certainly," I said; "I have known her always. I was one of Jolyff's ushers."

"Five years ago," said the prince—"precisely five years. She was a Miss Carr—Miss Evelyn Carr. Michael has been dead precisely five years."

"My dear sir," I said, "there was

nothing in little Miss Carr to attract such a man as Michael. She was a light-hearted, gay little flirt, of about as much use in the world as a butterfly, and just as charming to look at."

"Almost Michael's words," said Laniaski, "and yet he loved her in a way that is very difficult for you and me to comprehend."

"He saw very little of her," I said; "I am sure of that."

"My dear fellow," said the prince, "it does not take long to set fire to a haystack. If you like I will tell you the truth about the affair—all that Michael told me when we were together there in Ceylon."

"Evelyn Carr!" I said. "I was never so astonished."

"Seven years ago," said Prince Laniaski, "she was not known to him. He was very busy hammering golden thoughts into immortal shape. Do you recall his 'Hymn in June'—in which there is a description of a young girl among the roses?"

"You do not like the piece? Nor do I. Nor does any reader of perspicacity. In it there is too little of the divine fire which so crackled among the lines of Michael's later works. It is the composition of a youth maudlinly in love. But who else could have written it?"

"Michael composed that hymn of three hundred lines extempore, standing upon a beach and addressing his passion to the sea. That is why it is so powerless—so—so rank. It was a June night, on the midnight of the night he met her, that he stood upon the beach smoking his cigar, and crying aloud to the waves of the passion and longing that were his. But as a poem it is very rank—very maudlin. June roses, a young girl, love—and death to philosophy."

"He met her at a dinner party in the country. He did not even sit next to her, he told me, but zigzag from her; she at one end of the table, himself at the other, and on opposite sides. She was then just out of the school-room, and had indeed only taken the place at the table of an older sister confined sud-

denly to bed by a touch of bronchitis. She had had her hair done up for the first time, and wore her first low-necked dress. It was of white silk, printed like a wall paper, with immense pale pink roses. Michael told me all this—once. And I have remembered."

"He said that when he took his seat at the dining-table he was a normal man of active habits, very hungry. He sat on the left of Mrs. Carr, the girl's mother, and begged her to forgive him for a few moments of gluttonous silence while he devoured his soup. 'I am so hungry,' he said, 'and the soup is so good.'

"And then he became so interested in the topic which he had started, to wit, the necessity of hunger being satisfied before conversation could begin, that his soup was taken from before him almost untasted. That was very like Michael. And then he looked up and to the left, and found that Evelyn Carr was looking at him. And he was the man to draw a girl's eyes out of her head—the lion face of him, the dancing, Saxon eyes, and the red glistening mane—the color of the lighter markings in old Domingo mahogany. He said that for some moments she would not lower her eyes nor he his; and that then, and at the same moment, as if by mutual agreement, both looked away. That episode was repeated several times during dinner. With Michael it was a sudden call to his soul. But with the girl it was not that way at all. The first time she wished to see the effect of her eyes upon a man—any man. That is how I figure it. After that she felt a real attraction. But it was not of the soul."

"When the men were left to themselves Michael said that it seemed to him as if the room had been darkened; and though there were only two lamps burning under soft shades in the drawing-room, where the ladies had gone, he said that when he entered it it seemed bright like noon. He said further that this was not mere lover's talk, but an absolute, incomprehensible, physical illusion. He went

straight to where she sat and placed himself beside her. He said:

"We were not introduced. My name is John Michael and you are Miss Carr. My dinner was spoiled because I wanted to sit by you. I have never in my life seen anyone like you—never. I think you are a very wonderful person."

"Those were his first words to her—right there in the drawing-room among all the chattering people—delivered in that quick, quiet way of speaking which was his when deeply in earnest. He said that she did not answer him, but looked straight in his eyes with a strange, questioning look, and that she moved uneasily. Then he said:

"You are going to see a great deal of me, Miss Carr, whether you want to or not. It is one of those things that can't be helped. It is not your fault nor mine. I am going to know you very well."

"His expression must have told her even more than his words. And her heart must have beaten gladly to have exercised so sudden an influence over the man whose genius was already beginning to thunder throughout the English-speaking world. But she did not say anything to him.

"Miss Carr," he said, "will you come outside? I want to talk with you. I have never wanted to talk with anyone so much."

"He stood by, expectantly. And after hesitation she stood up, too.

"Outdoors?" she asked.

"Michael was never quite sure, but he thought these were the first words he had heard her speak. He said, 'Yes, outdoors,' and they walked over to where Mrs. Carr was sitting, and Michael said:

"Mrs. Carr, your daughter and I are going to walk in the garden. It is June and there is a splendid moon."

"Mrs. Carr smiled and said something about not taking cold and not letting her little girl bore him, and they went out.

"Michael sat up in his bed when he came to that part of the narration and

cried, 'Bore me! Bore me!—*Holy Mother of God!*'

"She started across the lawn to the rose garden, instead of going by the path, but Michael stooped and laid his hand on the grass and found that it was very wet, for there was a heavy dew. And he told her.

"Does that matter?" she said.

"That was the second thing she ever said to him.

"They walked across the lawn very slowly, without speaking. Michael was unsteady with nervousness, and she, too, must have been in a state of nerves, for as they walked they occasionally swayed and came into contact with each other. She had not even put a lace over her bare neck and shoulders. And Michael said that in the moonlight they were wonderfully smooth and white, though in the house they had looked over-slender and girlish. He said that he could hear only the sound of his own feet on the grass; that her steps were so light as to make no sound. 'She drifted at my side,' he said, 'like a little cloud.'

"The night was hot and sultry, and the rose garden was full of fireflies that sparkled here and there among the sleeping roses. They walked up and down the little gravel paths, and every now and then would come into contact with each other; her shoulder touching his upper arm, his fingers brushing against her dress. They came to the end of the garden and Michael stopped and looked at her for a long time, she meeting his eyes without flinching. He said that he began to speak then, and that he did not know the sound of his own voice.

"Two hours ago," he said, "I was my own man. Now I am yours. You can do with me what you please. All the way to this place I kept telling myself that I must not speak. That was why I said nothing to you all the way. I was giving myself orders. And now I am breaking them because I cannot help it. I did not believe that things could happen so quickly. But now I know. And you know. Are you going to say anything to me?"

"He said that she looked down then and answered that she did not know what to say.

"You may call it little more than an hour," Michael said to her. "But I tell you it began longer ago than that—in Babylon, perhaps—or longer, when men lived in caves. You don't say anything to me; but why do you stand there and listen if you aren't going to care back?"

"I don't know what to say to you," she said. "Nobody ever told me that they loved me before."

"Whenever I see you I shall tell you," Michael said. "When I can't see you I shall write it to you, until finally you are compelled to love me back."

"But," she said, "supposing it doesn't come to me, too?" And Michael told me that she had the expression of a little child who is puzzled—deeply puzzled about something or other. He stepped backward three steps deliberately and she stayed as she was.

"If you stay where you are," he said, "I am going to take you in my arms and kiss you. But I am giving you a chance to get away."

"She did not move."

"Michael told me that when little more than a boy he had nearly died of thirst somewhere in one of the great American deserts, and that water, when at length he found it, had not seemed so sweet to him as kissing that girl. At first she stood passive while he held her to his breast and kissed her, but after a time she began to cry and to kiss him back, and at the same time to struggle and push against him with her hands. Then he let her go."

"She retreated a few steps and stood looking at him."

"He could not, he said, for some time see her distinctly. She was vague and diaphanous to his eyes, like an object seen under water by a diver. And he said that it did not seem to him possible to draw sufficient air into his lungs to fill them. When this passed he went to her and took one of her hands in both his."

"God knows," he said, "that I

didn't go for to make you cry." Tears filled his own eyes as he spoke. "My girl mustn't be afraid of me. I love her too much—that's all—too much."

"After that they walked up and down in the rose garden for awhile with their arms about each other. And every now and then they stopped, and he would strain her against his breast and kiss her and be kissed back. Then they went back to the house——"

"Prince," I said, "do you know that I was at that very dinner party of the Carrs'? And I remember, though I had forgotten, that Michael and Evelyn did go for a walk. And I remember them as they came in. Did Michael throw any light on that phase?"

"No," said the prince. "How was it they came in?"

"They looked bored," I said. "Her hair was not even ruffled—Jove, how it all comes back!—her dress—the white one with the wall-paper pattern—was heavy about the bottom from the dew and stained with green from dragging over the grass. They were the most self-possessed young people you ever saw. And do you mean to tell me all that—that business had been going on outside?"

"It was exactly as I have told you," said the prince. "It was later on that very night that he stood upon the beach under the starry sky, and chanted his 'Hymn in June' extempore to the sea. The man must have been half mad with passion and joy—but the hymn, after all, is very youthful and rank."

"But who else could have made it?" I said. "And then what happened?"

"After that," said the prince, "the most interesting phase began. We are confronted with the problem of a young girl who, to all intents and purposes, has given herself to a certain man, who loves him, who desires him—and who avoids him. You have remarked that Michael saw very little of her. That is quite true. She would not let him. He wrote to her every day—sometimes many times in

one day—for nearly two years. I would like to have those letters. But it seems she destroyed them—after, I dare say, showing a few to her most intimate friends. She was capable of that. She destroyed them—she destroyed the glory of a mighty heart as it has never before been expressed. She destroyed the letters—and in due time Michael. I have seen some of the little notes which she addressed to him at this time—careless scrawls full of excuses. For the most part they were written on rough bluish paper, often blotted; and when I saw them they were stained by the sweat of the man above whose heart they had lain by day and night. Such phrases as these ran through them, much underlined: 'I am *terribly* sorry, but mama *positively* says that I *must* go to Boston with her'; 'Your letter *must* have gone astray, because I *never* got it, or I *surely* would have been at home when you called'; 'Please don't be angry with me, but I *honestly* couldn't be there, after all!'

"For the most part she dodged him, as you might say, but now and again there were meetings between them; quite often, indeed, in public; but rarely alone. Yet when they were alone she was all that she had been to him in the rose garden, and Michael has told me he believed she might have been more. Yes; once they were somewhere—I have forgotten where—alone, in some woodland by the sea, I think, late in the afternoon, and Michael was pleading with her to say on what day she would marry him. But she would not say on what day. Then Michael took her in his arms and kissed her, and she kissed him back, many, many times.

"Michael kept saying, 'I want you so—I want you so!'

"And suddenly she hid her face in his breast, and trembled violently and said, 'Then for God's sake take me!'

"In the name of everything," I broke in, "why wouldn't the little fool name a day and have done with it?"

"Because," said Laniaski, with more than his usual deliberation and with a ring of bitterness in his voice, "it seemed in those days that our poor friend was destined to become immortal rather than—rich."

"He became both," I objected.

"But not in time. Listen, my friend. That girl was a devil. She was the worst kind of a devil that is known. She loved our friend passionately, and she would not marry him because she feared to be poor. She kept away from him lest her very love for him should prevent her from making a rich marriage. That day, in the wood, was the only time that she said or meant a generous thing. For his own sake it is the greatest pity in the world that Michael was a gentleman; otherwise she would have been obliged to marry him."

"Better, perhaps," I said, "for him to be dead."

"I think not," said the prince. "It may sound strange to you after what I have said, but I think she would have made him a good wife. She loved him; of that there is no doubt. It was not a spiritual love, but let the term pass. She loved him. If she had married him then and there, I think all would have been well, for it was not long before money began to come to Michael in whole showers—literally in showers.

"But you can see why she was afraid to be with him, that is, from her point of view, having no wish to marry him. The end came like this. One day Michael, without sending word that he was coming, called at the Carrs' house in the country, and the maid told him that Miss Carr was somewhere in the garden; but she did not tell him that she was not alone. You have guessed, of course, that she was with Jolyff? Yes, in a sequestered nook of the rose garden. And what do you think she was doing? She was returning something that Jolyff had just given her—putting it exactly where it had come from—on his lips.

"Michael walked right up to them.

"I had understood that you were alone," he said to Miss Carr. "It was quite by accident that I saw what happened just now—but I thought it better to let you know that I had seen. Are you and Mr. Jolyff going to be married?"

"She looked him straight in the eyes. And I will say that she was no coward to say what she did—and so proudly.

"I would hardly, Mr. Michael," she said, "kiss a man that I did not intend to marry."

"Come, now, my friend, can you believe that?" said the prince. "Yet I have Michael's word for it, and, as we both know, he never lied."

"What did Michael do?"

"He felt for a moment as if spiders were stringing cobwebs in his head, and then his brain got wonderfully clear and full of notions. He turned to Jolyff and smiled.

"Mr. Jolyff," he said, "would you like to see something really quite remarkable?"

"Jolyff stammered and blushed as a man will who has just been caught behind a hedge kissing a girl.

"Michael made one stride to Miss Carr, crushed her to his breast, and kissed her over and over on the mouth. At first she struggled. Then she began to kiss him back. Between kisses he commanded her to say that she loved him, and she said: 'I love you—I love you.'"

"I'm damned," said I, and could hardly keep from laughing; "and what in heaven's name did Jolyff do?"

"Jolyff?" said the prince. "Why, he kept saying, 'I say, man, what are you doing?' over and over, he kept saying that."

"But he married her after all?"

"He did," said the prince. "She was very clever. But it is easy to see why Jolyff has never thrown any light on Michael's broken heart."

"And do you mean to tell me," I said, "that I was an usher at—at that wedding?"

"I have your own word for it," said the prince.

"I lied," I said. "I lied."

"Six months after they were married. Most of that time I was with Michael in Sumatra and the Straits Settlements. During that period—at the very beginning of it—his 'God in Heaven' was published. By every mail came fabulous royalties, and letters of fabulous adulation from all sorts and conditions of men among whom the English tongue is spoken. God! How that poem thunders! . . . for the ages of ages! . . .

"Poor Michael! He is dead and we are alive—sipping our tea, watching the traffic of the Avenue, discussing affairs of the heart. Tonight we are to dine and go to the play. And Michael lies there in Ceylon upon the top of a hill above the clouds, deep in his grave, covered with rocks lest the wild dogs should dig him up—dead, decaying, passing back into the womb of the great mother—and yet living with a glory which comes to but one man in hundreds of years—with a life that is to this existence of yours and mine as flame is to ashes. . . .

"Adulation and royalties were not what the poor fellow needed. He became emaciated—thinner even than I, and I weigh less than a hundred and twenty pounds for all my height and endurance. I thought his trouble organic at first. His appetite was good, but food did not seem to nourish him. I thought that his stomach needed attention. But it was his heart.

"I persuaded him out of that rank, stenching island of Sumatra, and got him with me to Ceylon—to Nuwara Elya in the hills. There was a good doctor in that place, very gentle and wise—for a wonder an Englishman—and he tested and examined our poor friend, but there was nothing to ascertain. His heart was broken, that was all. The involuntary act of keeping it at work pumping was exhausting him—exhausting him and starving him. His room was next to mine. Often I went and sat with him in the night, and piece by piece he told me why he was dying.

"But, I would say, 'that girl did

enough to bring any sane man to his senses, let alone you, my dear friend. Forget her—the little cat!”

“Even that did not comfort him. He would tap on the sheet—he was covered only by a sheet, and the contours which his body gave to it were the contours of bones—knees, ribs; all very shocking—he would tap on the sheet with his poor wasted fingers, and smile into my face.

“‘Lani,’ he would say; ‘dear, simple old Lani!’

“During those last days he sang a great deal, propped up in his bed. He would have his bed wheeled to the window—his room was on the ground floor, and there was a double hedge, half calla lilies, half heliotrope, as high as a man, that looked in at him through the window. And he would sit there and look out and sometimes sing. You remember how loud and sweet a voice he had—like—yes, something like a negro’s? God, how he could sing!

“One night I was wakened by the sound of his singing, and I said to myself, ‘Good, he is amusing himself,’ and turned half over, the better to listen. He was singing a canticle out of some church service—that which comes at the very end. How do you call it?”

“The Doxology?” I suggested.

“Yes; that was it. And it seemed to me in my drowsy state that nothing ever could have sounded so loud and beautiful and sweet.

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

“Then the house became quiet, but presently I heard footsteps in the hall. They stopped before Michael’s door, and I heard a sound of knocking and the whining voice of our landlord.

“‘Mr. Michael,’ he said, ‘I’m very sorry, sir, but it’s after hours, sir, and there’s a lady in the ‘ouse as says she can’t sleep for the racket, sir.’

“It was after hours, my friend, and John Michael lay dead in his bed.

“At about that time,” said the

prince, lowering his voice, “sixteen thousand miles away, Mrs. Jolyff and her husband were starting on their honeymoon. . . . I hope that some time while I am in town you will point her out to me.

“We could not get a coffin up to that high station in time, and so we buried Michael as he was, in his sleeping suit, and covered him with rocks so that the wild dogs should not dig him up. He had told me that, like Stevenson, he wished to be buried on the top of a high hill—on the top of Pedro, that tall mountain which overlooks nearly the whole of Ceylon, and is so often above the clouds. It was a long day’s work.

“As he lay by the side of the grave which we had caused to be dug, his hair, that gorgeous mahogany-red hair of his, touched by the sun, crowned his white face like an aureole, and it seemed to me that we were about to consign to the earth—a martyr.”

A victoria had drawn up in front of the Holland House, and a lady was giving cards and directions to a smart little tiger in dashing livery. The lady had a child with her in the victoria—a tiny mannikin of about two years.

“Prince,” I said, “your wish to see Mrs. Jolyff is easily granted. She’s calling on somebody in the hotel at this moment and is sitting outside in her victoria.”

“So that is she,” said the prince. “Will you present me?”

We went out bareheaded.

“Mrs. Jolyff,” I said, “may I present Prince Laniaski? He was with our old friend Michael in Ceylon when he died.”

“Truly?” said Mrs. Jolyff. “Were you *really*, prince?”

The prince bowed mechanically. He was not looking at her, but at the child, who for some unaccountable reason appeared almost to be attracting the eyes out of his head. I have never seen a gentleman—nor indeed anyone—stare so at anything. He turned to Mrs. Jolyff with a start.

“Yes,” he said, “I was with him.”

“You must dine with us some

night," she said, "and tell us about him. Will you?"

"Madame," said the prince, "I have traveled a great many thousand miles to tell you that I would rather enter the den of a rattlesnake."

He bowed, and with one last look at the child went back into the hotel.

"You presented that man to me!" said Mrs. Jolyff, very white about the lips.

"Yes," I said. "Forgive me—I didn't know that he was ever taken like that—but he has had strange experiences and has listened to stranger stories. Good-bye."

The prince was back at our table, sitting with his chin between his hands. I sat down facing him. At first he did not seem to see me. Then he drew a long breath.

"My friend," he said, "that woman

looks like a woman who—who is on her honeymoon."

That was almost the last thing that I would have expected him to say.

"How long," he went on, "has Michael been dead? It is five years, is it not?"

"Yes," I said.

"How old is that little boy of hers?"

"About two."

"Have they others?"

"No."

"Strange," said the prince, "very strange, for it passes all reason."

"What is so strange?" I asked.

"The child—the child," said the prince, with some show of impatience. "Did you notice nothing peculiar about the child?"

"No," I said. "What?"

"Man," said the prince, "he has Michael's eyes and hair!"



A HAPPY THOUGHT

SHE—My friend over there is a poor conversationalist. She says she can't think of anything to talk about.

HE—That's truly remarkable. By the way, why doesn't she have her appendix removed?



SHOULD BEGIN EARLY

BOBBY—Pa, I want to be a gentleman when I grow up.

WISE FATHER—It will be too late then, my boy.



KNOW only the best people—for you to know.

THE EPIDEMIC

By Arthur Macy

I AM feeling decidedly grippy,
And the lady who stands by my bed
(The reverse of the scolding Xantippe)
Is caressing my agonized head.
I assure you it's madly provoking
To be dosing with potion and pill,
Getting comfort not even from smoking,
Which is surely a sign that I'm ill.

This morning my wife made my toilet,
But the part in my hair doesn't suit,
For she managed completely to spoil it
With angles obtuse and acute.
She insists it's an absolute straight line,
And seals the remark with a kiss,
But if that's her idea of a pate line
I will part my own hair after this.

Yes, I'm down with the great epidemic,
Feeling older than dear "aged P."
So frequently mentioned by Wemmick
When Pip went to Walworth to tea.
(Do you notice the "Wemmick"? How clever,
How exceedingly fitting and pat.
Now, really I think that I never
Made a rhyme that was better than that.)

(I've a secret; perhaps you don't know it.
Let me whisper it under my breath:
When a person once thinks he's a poet
There is nothing will stop him but death.
And Shakespeare knew what was the matter
As he scribbled from breakfast to tea.
Like Remus's rabbit, "he hat ter,"
And that's just the trouble with me.)

I'm alternately sleeping and waking
With a fever and now with a chill.
And with dread I am constantly quaking
At the thought of the subsequent bill.
Though I cannot think sickness a blessing,
I accept it as something that's due,
But it seems to me rather depressing
To be ill and to pay for it, too.

THE SMART SET

I gaze at the walls and the ceiling,
 And the pictures of land and of sea;
 And though sure that the artists had "feeling,"
 I am conscious they left some for me.
 Then I hear that disquieting cuckoo,
 And I venture to make the remark
 That people will never have luck who
 Own clocks that do nothing but bark.

And now I take refuge in Boswell
 With the hope of forgetting my woes,
 And heartily wish that I was well.
 (My grammar is bad, but it goes.)
 And I read on sincerely and truly,
 But in the condition I am,
 Get pleasure not even from Dooley
 Nor the verses of Omar Khayyam.

I am feeling so sore and rheumatic;
 I've a pain all the length of my spine,
 And my head feels so queer and erratic
 I can hardly believe it is mine.
 But I'm learning the art of obeying
 The voice of a dominant will:
 And that voice at this moment is saying,
 "My dear, it is time for your pill."



A MAN OF MEANS

WILLIAMSON—Your friend owns a handsome automobile. He must have money.

HENDERSON—Oh, lots of it. Why, he can afford to run over the most expensive people in the city.



A NARROW ESCAPE

WATERS—You say you were well acquainted with my wife before I married her?

BRIDGES—I should say so! Why, my dear fellow, I came dangerously near not getting out of marrying her.

A TIDE IN THE AFFAIRS OF STEPHEN GIRDLER

By Guy Wetmore Carryl

AT intervals—rare intervals—Stephen Girdler touched earth. The shock of these collisions with the mundane and material caused him to rub his eyes and look about him, as it were, in a kind of dull amazement at the discovery of its existence; but he was presently away again, drifting serenely through the clouds of fancy or the pure, colorless ether of introspection. For want of a better word his kinsfolk and acquaintance called him absent-minded; but Stephen Girdler was absent-minded only in the sense in which Shakespeare was of a literary bent or Napoleon interested in strategy. The term, in short, was no more adequate to comprise the extent of his abstraction than is a dandy's monocle to comprehend the solar system.

Girdler's perpetual preoccupation was not a development of later life, though he had already completed four-sevenths of the Psalmist's span. With him it had been "ever thus, from childhood's hour." Reverie had been wont to descend suddenly upon him at school in the very midst of the five-table or that inspiring epic of the see-saw which, from the pages of the primer, proclaims dramatically:

Up, up we go.
See us go up.
We can see all the town.

Then his chin would drop and his very blue eyes grow wider and stare away into vacancy. He would only be recalled to a sense of the present by the slap of a switch on the teacher's desk, or, more often, on his own red knuckles. The other pupils gaped at

him; the teacher, a gaunt, angular spinster, who subsisted on tea and the poetry of Felicia Hemans, set him down as "wanting." She made no attempt to understand him—could not have understood him had she tried. No one, from first to last, understood Stephen Girdler—unless it was Mrs. Jabish Roberts, who came near thereto from the very outset. But this is to anticipate. He lived in a world of his own, a world of clouds and dreams and castles in the air.

As he grew up he passed many of the pleasures and privileges of life as he passed his acquaintances in the street, looking straight into their eyes, touching them, even; but serenely oblivious of their significance, their very presence. And Life is strikingly human in her sensitiveness to rebuff. When what she has tendered has been once refused, ignored or taken without thanks, she is chary of proffering further favors. Those who might have been Girdler's friends made allowance for his oversights, but it was an allowance not uncharacterized by limits, and these limits he was not long in reaching. Disregarded invitations, unanswered letters, names forgotten, faces looked into without a sign of recognition—all these were factors in the gradual elimination from his life of the humanizing element of society. Year by year the possibility of fellowship and friendship receded from him on every side, like a tide which swells to the foot of some grim cliff, touches it with a tentative caress and then, receiving no response, ebbs silently away.

In nothing was the abstraction of

Girdler more marked than in its blindness to its own consequences. It was not that he lacked tenderness, for advancing years made him singularly gentle, but simply that he did not see. The world of action and acute emotion swirled about him without effect. When in the least degree he responded to its influence it was, almost invariably, because it had disturbed him. It was, like the shrinking back of a zoöphyte from the intruding and irritating effect of altered temperature or light, instinctive, almost automatic. Little by little, in a series of such regressions before troubling influences, he came to be much alone, not often out of doors, but constantly with his nose in a book or the tip of his penholder between his lips and his very blue eyes staring away out of his study window, as he carefully formed and reformed some sentence in his life work, "The Relation of Eschatology to Belief."

At forty he had practically buried himself in his quarters on the top floor of an apartment house on Beacon street, in the company of Plato, Proclus, Bacon, Spinoza, Locke, Darwin, Kant, Hegel, Comte and the rest, and was rarely aware whether he had lunched or not or what particular day of the week it might chance to be. He was quite gray, stooping, mild-eyed, with purposeless hands and a premature shuffle. And Gustave, while bestowing much thought upon the fare, as will hereinafter appear, regarded him with supercilious contempt.

It was the opinion of Gustave that the lines were fallen unto him in pleasant places, and he was right. Girdler had undeniably engaged him as cook and general servant during one of the fleeting hours when he touched earth, and found himself interviewing the first applicant to reply to the advertisement inserted for him by his sister; but the philosopher, the bare details of their future association once agreed upon, vanished again into the mists of idealism, from which, thereafter, he emerged only as Gustave called his attention to the fact of wages due.

Gustave himself was of the fat, oily and shiny appearance which, in some fashion inexplicable, is so apt to accompany proficiency in the compounding of salad dressings. He prided himself, and justly, upon his cooking. His *tripes à la mode de Caën*, his *filet de sole cardinale*, his spaghetti and his *pêches flambées* were nothing short of inspirations. They caused one to rate Brillat-Savarin on a par with Mahomet or Martin Luther—as the founder, that is, of a religion. Gustave could fold a napkin so that it resembled a frigate under full sail. Gustave burnt butter to the infinitesimal point of perfection between too little and too much. Gustave handled tarragon as an expert handles nitro-glycerine—with the same avoidance of shocking casualties, the same inspired achievement of stupendous results. Gustave could peel an orange into a twin-brother likeness to a chrysanthemum. Gustave could hollow out a baby pineapple, stuff it with a delectable mixture of chopped apples, maraschino cherries, celery and its own extracted vitals, and pop on the top again so that no one would have imagined it to have been tampered with or even touched. And such things, if not in all respects the same, did Gustave do for the initial dinner which it was his privilege to prepare for Stephen Girdler. At seven o'clock he sailed triumphantly up to the door of the philosopher's study, flung it open and proclaimed, with an air, that *monsieur was servi*. Then he returned to the dining-room, assumed a Louis Quatorze attitude against the sideboard and awaited with confidence the logical stupefaction of his new employer.

When Mr. Girdler took his place at table his mild and dignified countenance was boarded up, like the doorway of a city residence in midsummer, with the covers of a work by Master Immanuel Kant. For full two minutes he made no movement, except to turn a page. Then one purposeless hand started on an uninspired journey of discovery, came into contact with the elaborately folded napkin, fumbled

helplessly and briefly with its complications, and finally deposited it in an abject wad upon his knees. He had not so much as looked at it!

Gustave served the *filet de sole*, and Mr. Girdler turned another page.

That was the beginning. The half-hour which followed was the most humiliating in Gustave's previous or subsequent experience. Once only did his master fairly lay his book aside. He had succeeded, without the most remote evidence of direct volition, in spearing and conveying to his mouth some fragments of the native flounder, now metamorphosed by *sauce cardinale* into a sole; and once, placing his book upon the table, with his eyes still glued upon the page, had hewn for a moment at a chop. Before this operation was productive of a result, however, Master Kant had something to say:

Empirical universality is only an arbitrary extension of the validity from that which may be predicated of a proposition valid in most cases to that which is asserted of a proposition which holds good in all.

Instantly Mr. Girdler's face was boarded up once more. Gustave served the salad—some shreds of which were in due time absorbed.

But now the philosopher fairly discarded his reading, and peered mildly at the dish before him, with the air of polite but puzzled inquiry observable in those unable to recall ones suddenly addressing them.

"Er—what is this?" he asked, touching it tenderly with his fork.

For an instant Gustave, catching hopefully at this thin evidence of interest, beamed with pride and pleasure.

"*Omelette soufflée, monsieur*," he explained, with a suave bow.

Mr. Girdler looked up at the ceiling.

"Necessity and strict universality," he observed, with an air of profound conviction, "'are infallible tests for distinguishing pure from empirical knowledge.'"

He picked up Immanuel Kant and rose.

"And, oh—er—Auguste," he added,

pausing at the door, "you may keep the—er—dessert until tomorrow."

He was gone.

Auguste! Au-gustel! Au-gustel! And "keep the dessert until tomorrow." *Mon Dieu! Keep an omelette soufflée!* Ah, name of a name of a good name, then! Name of a name of a name!

Thus Gustave, in the kitchen of Stephen Girdler's apartment. He ranged his disregarded creations before him in a row, like the awkward squad of which he had once been a member, in the barracks of Bordeaux, and addressed them, as he and his comrade *bleus* had been addressed by the drill-sergeant, after their first parade. It had been a feature of the drill-sergeant's harangue that he talked *through* the squad at the colonel, who had commended him, a moment before, upon his "sacred inefficiency."

It was a peculiarity of Gustave's that he declaimed *through* the offenseless viands at the base-born, ignoble, revolting species of a type of a stove broken down, in whose name-of-a-name service he had the unbelievable calamity to find himself. And thou, gargoyle of a sole!—wast thou then an exhibit at the Exposition of '89, and therefore now unfit to eat? And thou, camel of a chop!—wast thou plated, or waterproofed, or varnished, or what, to be thus impervious to the knife? And thou, example of an assassin of a salad!—what then? Wast thou for the pigs? *B'en!* Even the pigs would not touch thee! (This last, with tremendous and telling emphasis!)

When it came to the *omelette soufflée* Gustave fairly bowed his head upon his hands and wept. Upon it he lavished his most extravagant terms of endearment—"my cabbage, my angel, my Benjamin, my pigeon!" His emotion exhausted, he disposed of the dainty in ten mouthfuls, and, to some extent, was comforted.

In his study, Mr. Girdler, with the tip of his penholder between his lips, and his very blue eyes fixed on vacancy, was formulating a commentary

upon Master Kant's further assertion that "when strict universality characterizes a judgment, it necessarily indicates another peculiar source of knowledge, namely, a faculty of cognition *a priori*."

Truth to tell, Mr. Girdler had somewhat overdone it, had rather turned the poniard in the wound. He might at least have sampled the *soufflée*. It would, to be sure, have done him no appreciable good: but it could, on the other hand, have done him no additional harm, because his status as a man of the world, or even as one in possession of normal faculties, was irretrievably lost, so far as Gustave was concerned, from the moment when he failed to notice that faultlessly folded napkin.

On the following day Gustave tried a few experiments. He carried *monsieur's* shoes out into the kitchen, with a magnificent display of particularity, swung them gravely three times about his head, and returned them to the spot where he had found them. He inquired whether *monsieur* would take tea or coffee for breakfast, and, on being told coffee, deliberately served him tea. He entered the study four times in the course of an hour to ask one and the same question in regard to replenishing the fire. Finally, he diluted the Chateau Margaux to half-strength at the pantry faucet, and served it with unimaginable dignity.

Throughout the course of these machinations he was prepared, at the least sign of remonstrance, to prostrate himself, with elaborate expressions of innocence and regret. But there was no objection. Girdler passed the day deep in Spinoza's "Ethica." He put on the unblacked boots serenely, revolving the definitions in his mind. He contentedly drank the tea he had not ordered, digesting the axioms meanwhile. He courteously replied, "No, thank you," to each of Gustave's four identical questions, pondering upon the distinction between the *natura naturans* and the *natura naturata*.

Now, was it to be expected that, at dinner, the fact that the Chateau Margaux was diluted could percolate into a brain already occupied by the theory that "the sequent itself is antecedent to some subsequent change, and the former antecedent was once only a sequent to its causes"? But Gustave had carried to a triumphant conclusion a demonstration which boasted at least the virtue of immediate significance over any of Spinoza's.

"The ancient onion," he remarked aloud, when he was once more in the kitchen, "observes nothing of what goes on around him. *Houp-là alors!*"

As may be inferred from this playful exclamation, it had just dawned upon Gustave in what pleasant places his lines were fallen unto him. He hastily swallowed his dinner, piled all the dishes together in the pan, ran the cold water briefly upon them, sallied forth jauntily to a billiard saloon of which he wotted, and returned at midnight, very pitifully drunk.

Thus was the keynote to the position sounded. It was plain to Gustave that the easiest, as well as the most agreeable, method of procedure was simply to follow the dictates of his own ingenious fancy. He continued to provide his employer with the most tempting viands, but purely with the view of feasting afterward in person upon the surprisingly adequate remains. His other duties were distinguished by the alacrity with which he did not perform them. On the rare occasions when the boots were cleaned at all the result was achieved with stove polish, which, unlike ordinary blacking, with three strokes of the brush produces a certain effect—not a striking effect, to be sure, but quite good enough, as Gustave assured his friend, the grocer's man, for such a thirty-centime dream-book as Stephen Girdler.

During the morning hour supposedly sacred to house-cleaning Gustave's feather-duster suggested, more than anything, a particularly fastidious

humming-bird. It whirled in midair, it hovered, it dipped, it rose, but it rarely lighted, and then for an instant only. One might trace the sole results of Gustave's dusting by clean spots, no larger than vaccination scars, here and there in the vast expanse of accumulated dust. After a fashion, he made the beds; after a fashion, he cleaned the silver; after a fashion, he washed the dishes; but it was all after a very debonaire and casual fashion, which left no wrinkles of anxiety or overwork upon his face, as fat, white and expressionless as the breast of a boiled goose. He bought enormously of the grocer's man on a basis of co-operative commissions; wore Stephen Girdler's clothes, drank his wine, invented each day a new and more ingenious epithet for that unconscious worthy, spent every evening in the billiard saloon aforesaid, and returned invariably very pitifully drunk indeed: for all of which he received the sum of fifty dollars a month for the space of three months, and might be receiving it yet had it not been for Mrs. Johnny Vail, in the first instance, and, in the second, for Mrs. Jabish Roberts.

Mrs. Johnny was Stephen Girdler's married sister, a conspicuously trim and continually busy little woman, with smart clothes, a keen eye and a crooked smile over white and even teeth. She went through life at a hurling rate of speed, doing, in one way or another, a vast deal of good. Her charities were of the broad, sane and wholesome kind which are concerned more with those who lack the means, but not the will, to help themselves than with the merely limp. Her enthusiasms were books, Russian brass, music and John Vail ad—at just this period, three years of age; but she found time, once a quarter, to drop in upon her brother Stephen.

Her visits would have borne less resemblance in length and frequency and more in general character to those of angels had it not been for an impression, not illogically prevalent in the circle of the Girdler family, that Stephen profoundly desired to be let alone.

To the energetic Mrs. Johnny the dreamy-eyed philosopher appeared to be in little better than a state of chronic coma and she cared somewhat less than nothing for "The Relation of Eschatology to Belief"; but after all he was her brother. As such he not only had, as she conceived, a certain claim upon her, but bore, as toward her, a certain responsibility. Now, having satisfied the claim by an account of her doings and plans, she laid siege to the responsibility, as she drew down her veil and carefully put on her gloves.

"The trip will do you good, Stephen. You need a shake-up now and again; and, all said and done, it's only for four days. As soon as we sail you can come straight back to—to all this." And she pointed one slender forefinger at the manuscript with a pretty air of disdain. "You haven't seen New York in five years," she added, "and that amounts to saying that you've never seen it at all."

"I don't see how I can manage it," responded Girdler, vaguely troubled. "I don't like to leave the apartment. My books——"

"Are sadly in need of dusting," put in his sister promptly, "as is everything else about the place. So far as I can judge you have what my friend Mrs. Roberts would call an 'eye-servant,' Stephen. And, by the way, she'll be the very person to come in and give the apartment a thorough cleaning while you are gone."

"Mrs. Roberts?" repeated Stephen, in a tone of mild inquiry.

"Yes—Mrs. Jabish Roberts. Haven't I ever told you about her? She's a most wonderful person who lives in Salem and can make anything, from a mattress to a political speech. She opens and closes the Beverly house for us every year—quite the most capable woman I've ever known. She'll come in the day you leave and be gone by the time you come back, leaving everything as neat as a pin. I'm only sorry you won't have a chance to hear her talk; that's the best part of her. But I forget—that wouldn't appeal to you."

She tilted her chin at him and rose. She had taken a good deal for granted, but that was characteristic of Mrs. Johnny Vail. She was accustomed to getting what she wanted, and this instance was no exception to the rule. One week later Stephen Girdler actually accompanied the Vails to New York to see them off to Europe. At the last moment he essayed a final, feeble protest:

"Really, Constance, I don't feel like leaving the apartment."

"Well, it's too late to change the plans now," retorted Mrs. Johnny firmly. "You have your ticket and Mrs. Roberts is coming tomorrow. It's all arranged. And, besides, it isn't proper for *anyone* to stay cooped up in one place, month in and month out. It's worse than the Eskimos, who sew themselves up in their clothes and stay that way for a year at a time!"

So Girdler tore himself away, with a regretful sigh, and the following morning Mrs. Jabish Roberts made her appearance on the scene.

Mrs. Roberts was a widow, slightly on the further side of forty. She was small, wiry, energetic and scrupulously neat. Her eyes, from behind her gold-rimmed spectacles, fairly snapped. She was never wholly idle. Apart from the fact that her tongue was, as she euphoniously expressed it, "hung in t' middle, so's it could waggle at both ends," she was continually looking for something dusty, broken, torn or out of place, and remedying the deficiency upon the spot. Even as she waited for Gustave to answer the bell of Stephen Girdler's apartment, she bent down suddenly, squinted at the tarnished brass doorknob, and then ejaculated, "Humph!"

Since Columbus appeared before the aborigines, or Perry confronted the Shogun of Japan, there was never a meeting more incongruous than that between Gustave and Mrs. Jabish Roberts. The latter took in the former at a glance—his fat face, his sly eyes, his soiled white waistcoat and his oily hair.

"You Mist' Girdler's servant?" she

asked. At such a time Mrs. Roberts never used superfluous words.

Gustave bowed. He loathed this intruder at first sight.

"Furriner, ben't you?"

"I am Fer-rench," answered Gustave, as who should say, "*L'Etat c'est moi!*"

"Thought so, w'en I seen that there doorknob," observed Mrs. Roberts drily. "Guess you don't earn your pay, whatever 'tis. I'm Mis' Roberts—come t' redd up. Go take off that there vest an' put on a clean one. I can't abide dirt. I'll need you d'rectly."

She had disappeared, and was out of her cloth dress and into a print one before Gustave had found his bearings. He was bracing the inner man with a draught from the brandy decanter when she abruptly reappeared at the dining-room door.

"Thought's much," she said, eying him with extreme disfavor. "W'ere's the dusters?"

She attacked the apartment with her customary vigor, covering the bookshelves with newspapers, hanging rugs and mattresses out of every window and piling ornaments in compact but orderly groups on the beds and divans, and covering them with sheets, at every step unearthing some new evidence of Gustave's criminal negligence.

"Guess you ain't wore out any dusters sence you ben here," she observed presently. "There ain't no sign o' them cushions hevin' ben beat sence Noah druv in the an'mals, two b' two."

"I dus' ever' day, ever'w'ere," retorted Gustave superbly.

Mrs. Roberts paused deliberately and stared at him through her spectacles.

"Well!" she said, "'twouldn't do you no harm t' learn th' eleventh verse o' the hundred an' sixteenth Sam by heart!"

Gustave airily seated himself at the piano.

"I'm ze boss here," he observed, with a gesture of disdain, "w'en Mees-taire Gairdler's gone," and immediately gave a brilliant, if strikingly in-

correct, performance of the "Marseillaise." Entranced, he repeated it, and, enraptured, repeated it again. Suddenly Mrs. Jabish Roberts seized him by his pulpy shoulders and shook him vigorously.

"Ef y' ain't got nothin' better t' do," she exclaimed, "'n t' set an' *deesen* folks, go on out w'ere y' b'long!"

Petrified, he went, annexing the brandy decanter as he passed, and Mrs. Roberts fell to work again.

"Shif'less numskull!" she said, pounding a cushion viciously. "Ef I hed the runnin' of him I'd warm his pants f'r him quick enough!"

Three hours produced a vast change in the appearance of Stephen Girdler's library. There was a sweetish smell of soapsuds and warm water in the air, the window-panes glistened, the green upholstery looked as fresh as foliage after a summer rain, and now Mrs. Roberts was on her knees before the book-shelves, dusting each volume with a soft cloth and replacing it with an eye to proper alignment. She had not called on Gustave for assistance. That gentleman had retired to the seclusion of his bedroom, and was there communing with the decanter. He came forth at noon, to meet his friend, the grocer, at the back door.

In Gustave, as well as in the apartment, three hours had produced a change. The brandy decanter was half empty now, and his sense of importance aggravated to the point of recklessness. On a sudden Mrs. Roberts heard his voice behind her:

"Ziss my fr'en, ze gro-caire!"

She cast a glance over her shoulder. Gustave was balancing himself in the doorway, with one hand on the portières. The grocer stood beside him. Both men wore their hats. Both were leering.

Mrs. Roberts hurriedly assembled her ideas. The mop she had been using stood within reach, in a brown pail of thick suds.

"I don't make up t' grocers, ner anythin' o' th' sort," she replied scornfully.

"Doan' be ker-oss, mother!" exhorted Gustave.

Mother! Mrs. Jabish Roberts rose and seized her weapon. In some such fashion as that wherein Brian de Bois-Guilbert was wont to couch his lance she laid her mop in rest. Then she drove straight at Gustave's maudlin smile, and struck her mark full, fair and square!

The effect was stupendous. Blowing foam like a wounded whale, the discomfited *chef* capsized, went under, and, disdaining protest or resistance, made rapidly, on hands and knees, for the pantry door. The grocer, never a man of large initiative, perceived nothing in the way of suggestion save that of example. This he wisely followed. A moment later Mrs. Roberts was alone in the library—five minutes later alone in the apartment. Between them the two in the kitchen had finished the decanter, and then, Yankee and Gaul alike being thus fortified with Dutch courage, they sallied forth together. Gustave rode in the grocery wagon as far as the billiard saloon, wherein, with immense satisfaction and no little hilarity, he passed the remainder of the day.

When Mrs. Roberts discovered this defection she rejoiced rather than repined. To herself she qualified it as the best kind of riddance to the worst kind of rubbish, and forthwith she extended the field of her activities to include the kitchen, the pantry, the larder, and even Gustave's private sleeping apartment. She was a brave woman, with both the will and the strength for vigorous and continual warfare against the twin demons of dirt and disorder; but even she went limp before what was thus revealed.

"No power on airth," she declared, when breath returned to her, "not even Mis' Vail"—and this was saying volumes—"would a-make me tetch them there messes!"

Before she had fully realized her intention, she was out of her print dress again and into her cloth one,

and was making her preparations for departure. For the first time in her life she was beating a retreat.

She was tying her bonnet strings when the telephone bell rang sharply, and, instinctively systematic even at the height of her rage and indignation, she went to the study in answer to the call. For some moments the mumbling of the person at the other end was wholly unintelligible. The first clear word was "Mother!"

"Oh, it's you, is it, you vagabone?" exclaimed Mrs. Roberts. "W'at in lan' do y' want?"

Presently it was made imperfectly clear that Gustave proposed to bring two friends—cousins, he was careful to explain—back to dinner. The announcement, unnecessarily elaborate in form, was punctuated by an occasional "hic" which was in no degree due to the mechanism of the telephone.

"Well, you'll not, then!" retorted Mrs. Roberts emphatically. "You'll not bring a livin' soul here w'ile y'r master's gone—not ef I know et! Mother, indeed! I'll mother you, y' lump o' good-f'r-naught!"

"Wash-ash?" inquired Gustave genially.

Mrs. Roberts rang off. Then, as she would have expressed it, she felt herself growing cold all over. To what did she stand pledged if not to mount guard over Mr. Girdler's property until his return? Lacking this, what guarantee was there that the "vagabone" would not complete the devastation he had so effectively begun? She began to perceive that, if only by her last words, she stood committed to a course of duty, and Duty, with Mrs. Jabish Roberts, began with a capital from the canon font of type.

"Ef 'tain't too exasp'ratin'!" she said aloud. And then her eyes fell on a photograph of Stephen Girdler.

He was rather good-looking, was Stephen Girdler, though he himself would have been the last person to think so. His face had an expression of singular and winning gentleness,

together with a disarming and appealing suggestion of innocence and helplessness. His large, mild eyes showed one immediately that he was born to be imposed upon. One was impelled to take him under wing, to shield him, to soothe him with, "There—there—there!" or some kindred expression of reassurance. What was more, he bore a certain rather close resemblance to the late moderately lamented Jabish Roberts.

"So that's him," reflected the widow. "I knowed et like a flash, f'om his likeness t' Mis' Vail. Likely lookin' feller, an' I'll warr'nt ez innercent ez a babe unborn. Like's not he ain't hed no idee o' w'at's ben a-goin' on, right under his poor nose. Well, I ain't a-goin' t' see him d'frauded. I'll just *set* tell he gits back!"

And "set" she did. Gustave, maudlinly eloquent, returned at midnight and was summarily refused admission. Gustave, sobered and inclined to repentance, reappeared at noon the following day, and, for sole satisfaction, had his limited wardrobe handed out through the back door, piece by piece, with the library tongs. Gustave, in a state of progressive contrition and bewilderment, came back at intervals during the ensuing forty-eight hours and was met by one invariable stereotyped reply:

"Y' don't set foot ento this here flat tell Mist' Girdler gits back—ef y' do *then*!"

On the fourth day the object of Mrs. Roberts's unpremeditated loyalty returned. He let himself in with a latch-key, left his hat and valise on a chair which he barely noted and immediately forgot, and went directly to his study, where he plunged at once into the fourth column of Fiske's "Cosmic Philosophy," for which he had been longing, with something like an opium-eater's craving, ever since his train had left New York. As was to be expected, he knew no more till dinner-time.

That moment, however, with Mrs. Roberts at the study door, in her trim print dress, was one of those rare ones when Stephen Girdler touched earth.

"Er—where is Gustave?" he inquired.

"I've sent him a-packin' about his business," announced Mrs. Roberts coolly. "A lazy, drunken, shif'less feller, that's w'at *he* was, Mist' Girdler. W'en I seen w'at he'd done to your apartment I'd a-like t' hev slapped his stomach, that I would. Now, I'm Mis' Roberts, an' I'm a-minded t' stop right here an' see t' y'. Ef y' got any questions t' ast about me y' can ast them o' Mis' Vail, an' I guess w'at she'll hev t' say'll satisfy y'. I've got a temp'ry cook, an' I'll wait at table tell I've learned her how. Y'r dinner's ready."

It was a full fortnight before she addressed him again.

"Y'd do better t' put that there readin' one side an' eat y'r steak w'ile et's hot. Y'll hev t' excuse my speakin' out in meetin', Mist' Girdler, but I can't abide t' see good food give the go-by."

This was a stupendous step in advance, but Stephen Girdler looked up with an odd and unaccustomed little smile. In the two weeks just gone he had, contrary to his usage, been noticing many things—the scrupulous order

and cleanliness of his surroundings, the excellent and unusual homely flavor of his food, the trim, decisive presence of this *dea ex machina*, whose very name, more often than not, would slip his memory. Now, as he looked at her, he was suddenly impressed with her extreme gentility and smitten with a sense of shame that this quiet, capable and ladylike person should be performing a menial service for him.

"Er—couldn't you let the girl do the serving?" he inquired gently. "I don't like—that is, it seems as if you should take your place at table as well as I."

Mrs. Roberts surveyed him approvingly. At the moment his resemblance to the late Jabish was more than ordinarily striking. She had never violently cared for Jabish, but she had had a deal of comfort out of "doin' f'r him," as she said. In this sense she missed him acutely. And the house at Salem was lonely. And she was getting on. And—well—perhaps—

"Well, no doubt I'll set in with y'," she replied, with the faintest hint of a blush, "w'en I git things runnin' t' rights."

The which, as Mrs. Jabish Roberts more than half suspected, was prophecy!



PAST COUNTING

COLONEL BLOOD—When I was in your city I counted twenty saloons in one block.

NEW YORKER—I suppose you lost consciousness after that.



FLEETING FAME

BRIGGS—There goes Bender, author of one of the best selling novels of the week.

GRIGGS—I don't remember him.

"Well, you know it was last week."

A QUEST

WHAT ways through the wide world, east or west,
 Shall I follow, dear, to find you?
 Perhaps by some road I know the best
 I should fare and—not far behind you—
 Perhaps by the changing tracks that cross
 Where the suns and the storms are beating,
 'Mid the lonely reaches where swift waves toss,
 I might seek for the place of meeting!

Ah, whatever the road, or south, or north,
 Through chill of snow, or the glowing
 Of passion-roses, I journey forth
 Far, far as the winds are blowing!
 Oh, heart of my heart; when I reach you, when
 The arms of my longing bind you,
 It may be that then, and only then,
 I shall know I can never find you.

MADELINE BRIDGES.



AN INCONVENIENCE

BIBBS—A man who becomes rich can pick his friends.
 GIBBS—Yes, but there are drawbacks. He can't choose his poor relations.



QUITE TRUE

SHE—You silly boy! Why waste your love on a girl you can't get?
 HE—Well, it's better than wasting it on some that I can get.



NOT HER FIRST AFFAIR

MR. ARDENT—Aren't you glad that I am going to marry your sister, Bobby?
 BOBBY—I'm glad you think you are.

CANDOR AND COURTESY

By Agnes Repplier

THERE are certain virtues which seem to have an insuperable objection to living peacefully and quietly—as virtues ought to live—in one another's company. Turgenieff has told us the story of Jove's great banquet, at which there were no guests save virtues—all feminine—and how, upon this august occasion, two radiant creatures, Benevolence and Gratitude, met for the first time. But there are others—old and intimate acquaintances—who will not work harmoniously together, and of these Candor and Courtesy are conspicuous for their disagreements. The efforts made to reconcile them have been, on the whole, less determined than the bickerings of their allies. It has been assumed that incompatibility of temper must forever debar these admirable qualities from joining hands to perfect a human soul.

All the best arguments are marshaled on the side of Candor, and we dilate with our finest emotions at her name. The word truth, like the word liberty, is held too sacred for analysis. It is the sublime centre around which revolve sentiments of rare nobility applicable to the pulpit, the platform and the stage. Only the still, small voice of experience whispers an occasional warning in behalf of Courtesy, who, like many another unobtrusive virtue, gets little credit for the helpful part she plays. Yet it has been well said that the difference between habitual rudeness and habitual politeness in a man's behavior is probably as great a difference as he will ever be able to make in the sum of human happiness. And the arithmetic of life consists in

adding to or subtracting from the pleasurable moments of mortality. Neither is it worth while to draw fine distinctions between pleasure and happiness. If we are indifferent to the pleasures of our fellow-creatures it will not take us long to be indifferent to their happiness as well. We do not grow generous by ceasing to be considerate.

The mysterious connection which has been established between rudeness and probity on the one hand, and between politeness and insincerity on the other, must be held responsible for much that is disagreeable in our daily intercourse with our neighbors. It is a perfectly illogical connection, based upon a narrow knowledge of human nature; but it is not to be driven from men's minds.

So rugged was he that we thought him just,
So churlish was he that we deemed him true.

There are times, doubtless, when candor goes straight to its goal and politeness misses the mark. Mr. John Stuart Mill was once asked upon the hustings whether he had ever said that the English working classes were generally liars. He answered shortly: "I did"; and the unexpected reply was greeted with loud applause. He was wont to quote this incident as proof of the value set by Englishmen upon plain speaking. They do value it, and they value still more the courage which defies their bullying. And then the remark was, after all, a generalization. We can bear tolerably well, *en masse*, the hearing of our faults, because everybody believes that the cap fits his neighbor's head.

Yet there is something discouraging about the prefix "plain." It does not

carry with it assurances of pleasing. A plain dinner, a plain duty, a plain woman, a plain child—all are very good in their way, but all are very far from beguiling. A plain truth is sure to be a disagreeable truth, and it is almost sure to be disagreeably spoken. For there is much unkindness in the world which finds expression in speech; and even when no active animosity, no latent cruelty wings the unwelcome word we feel the absence of good will. The plain-speaker may not be unfriendly, but neither is he our friend. The best that has been said of him is that he is a Laodicean, unconcerned either with our pleasure or our pain.

M. Rondalet, in "*La Réforme Sociale*," says with admirable perspicuity that the amenities of life stand for its moral responsibilities and translate them into action. They express externally the fundamental relations which ought to exist between men. "All the distinctions belonging to good breeding, so delicate and sometimes so complicated, answer to a profound unconscious analysis of the duties we owe to one another."

This is worth careful consideration. "Manners maketh Man" is the motto of New College, Oxford, and its founder devoutly believed that there is a close and intimate connection between our outward demeanor and our inward grace. Politeness may not necessarily imply unselfishness, but it often expresses it, and it is always so good a discipline that its exercise cuts short our chances to be selfish in the trivial things of life. The perpetual surrender which politeness exacts must reduce the sum total of our selfishness. To listen when we want to talk, to talk when we want to be silent, to stand when we want to sit down, to accept the companionship of a stupid acquaintance when we might, at the expense of politeness, escape, to regard with smiling composure the near presence of small children—all these things, and many like them, brace the sinews of our souls. They are not easy. It is not even easy to temper our speech to the shorn lamb who listens to us; to

say what we think will give pleasure rather than strike that sharp note of individualism which seldom stops short of brutality. People "desperately in earnest," we are told, cannot pause to be polite; but "desperate" is a disagreeable adjective to put before earnestness. It weakens rather than augments its power. "The cultivated and reasoned attitude which we call courtesy" carries weight with thoughtful people. It means that we control our own forces, that we have been drilled in the priceless discipline of civilization.

There are people who balk at the commonplaces of daily intercourse because they are manifestly insincere: those expressions of unfelt pleasure or regret with which we accept or decline invitations, those compliments, those regards, those small, affectionate phrases which begin and end our letters, those agreeable formalities which have accumulated around the simplest actions of life. The Quakers, as we know, made a mighty stand against verbal insincerities, with one striking exception—the use of the word "Friend." They claimed, indeed, that this word represented their attitude toward humanity, their spirit of universal tolerance and brotherhood; but to address another man as "Friend" is to imply that *he* regards *you* in this affectionate light, which he may be far from doing. When a preacher or an orator says "My friends" he uses the word in a very Pickwickian sense. It is best not to analyze too closely the polite phrases which facilitate intercourse and contribute to the amenity of life. They mean next to nothing, but if we abandoned them all tomorrow we should not be one step nearer the vital things of truth.

For to be sincere with ourselves is much better and much harder than to be painstakingly accurate with our neighbors. Self-deception is too subtle to be recognized and too pleasant to be forsaken. We know when we have lied to others, but we don't know, and we don't want to know, when we have lied to ourselves.

When Bishop Butler wrote his famous sentence, "Things and actions are as they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be," he did not add, "Why should we desire to deceive?" but "Why should we desire to be deceived?" A man may be cruelly candid to his friends, and a cowardly hypocrite to himself. He may handle his neighbor harshly, and himself with velvet gloves. He may never have told the fragment of a lie in all his life, and never have thought the truth. He may hurt the pride and wound the feelings of all who come into contact with him, and never give his own soul the benefit of one good knock-down blow.

Plain-speaking is endurable only when it is immaculately free from censoriousness. We all know people who seem to think aloud, so crystal clear is their speech, so limpidly and transparently truthful. We all know people who have in their natures a recognizable element of brutality, a strain of kinship with primeval man

who domineered impolitely over his antediluvian household. Yet though these plain-speakers blunder strangely in cutting their clean way through the labyrinth of words, their blunders are easily and often affectionately forgiven, because fault-finding is as foreign to them as pretense. Their attitude is not judicial. Their outspoken speech expresses and implies no censure. And then we hardly need to be told that "frequent lapses add a pathetic charm to contrasting excellence, and it is often the nature that can be brutal whose gentleness is so exquisite." What is difficult to endure is the deliberate utterance of truths, unasked and unwelcome; truths which are not noble in themselves, and which are not nobly spoken, which may be trusted to offend, and which nobody expects to illuminate. It is not for this that we have perfected through centuries the priceless gift of language; it is not for this that we meet one another in the charming intercourse of life.



PARADOXICAL

DASHAWAY—How was that seaside hotel?

CLEVERTON—Rank—only one bright spot in it.

"And that?"

"The dark spot on the back piazza."



WELL WORTH THE OUTLAY

ALICE—Mrs. Suddenrich doesn't think that the money spent in educating their daughter was wasted.

ISABEL—Of course not. Anyone can see that Mrs. Suddenrich's manners are greatly improved.

THE ENDLESS SPRING

THERE comes a whisper through my heart
 As night o'ertakes me on my way
 Where I would hold my cares apart
 And mourn the silent autumn day;
 The paths I love await the snows,
 The boughs are bare of flit of wing,
 Yet through my heart the whisper goes
 That somewhere—somewhere, there is spring.

I care not whether near or far—
 Through other lands and climes it goes
 With drift of blossom, glint of star
 And old-time message of the rose;
 I cannot ask that it should stay
 If hearts afar lack comforting;
 Enough for me to know alway
 That somewhere—somewhere, there is spring:

Belovèd—ah, where'er you be
 For whom my thoughts like thrushes sing,
 You, too, perchance will whisper me
 That somewhere—somewhere there is spring?

THOMAS WALSH.



WELL-FOUNDED FEAR

SHE—Let you kiss me! Why, I've known you only two days.
 HE—True, but I was afraid you wouldn't allow it if you knew me better.



HIS MODERN EDUCATION

"HASN'T Gayboy been mixed up in several divorce suits?"
 "Yes; he's a graduate of a co-respondents' school."

WHEN DELOS DRIFTED

By Beatrix Demarest Lloyd

I FELT aggrieved when Imbrie married. Not, certainly, because he had forsaken the ranks of the bachelors where he and I had shouldered it together for some years, but because it made such a difference. And then, too, there was something in the way it was done that hurt us all, and of course especially me. For, like Mrs. Gumridge, I was disposed to consider, and the others seemed to yield it me as my rightful privilege, that I should "feel it more than most."

The very office had an altered look when I came into it, rather later than usual, at about eight o'clock that nasty November night. Nash and Dominick and Myers were at their places, but they had an unusual appearance, as if the President had been assassinated or somebody's salary had been raised. Loew, the night editor, had not come in yet, and his desk, like the hub in our wheel of desks, was lightly littered with copy waiting for his malignant pencil.

Von Briesen, whose desk was next to mine on the left, crossed the room as I came in and fell into his seat.

"Hello, Barclay!" he said; "you've heard the news?"

They were so evidently bursting with it that a childish resentment of their advantage filled me. And yet, of course, I hadn't heard, and Dominick, looking up and keeping a heavy finger stolidly upon the place where he had broken off in his editing, gave me a keen, comprehensive look which took in my ignorance.

Dominick, we used to say, was inert from the nose down, but from that

point up there wasn't a quicker or a sharper man on the staff.

"Hasn't heard a thing," said Dominick, and went back to his suspended corrections.

"No, I haven't heard any news," said I, without much interest. "Has anyone, ever, in this office?"

Myers grunted: "We have, tonight."

"Well?" I queried somewhat wearily. There was, after all, I thought, no need to lead up so dramatically to their disclosure. "Will it do for a scoop?"

There was a pause as I stood, one foot on my chair, turning down my trousers. Somehow they all looked at Dominick as if silently electing him their spokesman. He felt it apparently, for he looked up, keeping the finger again at its place. His sharp eyes glowed with something almost like excitement.

"Imbrie is married!" he said.

I think I must have remained motionless, staring for some moments, and then my impression is that I sat slowly and deliberately into my chair. I saw my hand reach for a page of copy from Loew's desk, and knew, although I didn't read a word, that I was looking at it quietly. I knew, too, that the eyes of the circle were watching me, wondering, for Imbrie and I had been as David and Jonathan for fifteen years.

"He might have told us, I think," I said.

After that and for the many days of silence I nursed my wound quite tenderly. Imbrie had not only married but he had resigned, and to all appear-

ances it cost him no single pang to drop out of our ken and condition. We missed him, but there came no sign from him that he missed us. I think among themselves my fellow-desk editors discussed the matter, wondering undoubtedly who the woman was, but they never spoke of it to me. I was hurt, sorely and deeply, but I went about my ways and asked for no news of him.

Imbrie had been a curiously potent influence in my life; indeed, I often thought, in the lives of us all. There was a tremendous power in his gentleness, and his amazing purity was full of vigorous appeal. He was an impossible man to describe, for to give an idea of just how complete was his cleanliness and innocence is to risk drawing the man a prude and a poser. And yet how far was Imbrie from these things! I have seen him kill many a spicy story simply by coming quietly into the room. He would catch Myers so often coughing in his attempt to let his voice grow beautifully less that I think Imbrie was quite worried in his great-hearted way about the man.

Imbrie was good. Good he was in a nice, natural way, taking it for granted that everybody else was as fine as he; not, as is the manner of some good men, that they were all in need of his help and example and advice. And there wasn't a man in the offices who did not love him and wish him well and respect him with a depth that knew no fathoming.

He had gone so completely and so silently that it was quite like having heard that he was dead, and I came to look upon the separation as so nearly that that the reality interested me but little.

When I did think of it it was to grow a little bitter and to ponder somewhat disapprovingly upon the influence of woman.

My grievance had grown so far with me after a time that I had fairly begun to cherish it, when it was gently and quietly taken from me—oh, about two months after his marriage—by a letter from Imbrie asking me out for

the week-end. I was disposed at first to regard the letter coldly and in an unforgiving spirit, but it was an impossible attitude to maintain. The very look of his quaint pennings, that I had seen so often by the tail of my right eye, in our shoulder to shoulder work, appealed with an irresistible familiarity. The page fairly smiled at me, and through its medium I could see the good old face of Imbrie and could hear him say, "Come, don't be stuffy." After all, I found myself arguing with myself, as if a man were to push his own head under water—why shouldn't a fellow have his honeymoon in peace?

So I packed up and started on the heels of my telegram. It was cold—cold of the kind that fairly snaps in the still snow. And the train was of that uncomfortable warmth that produces a comatose stupidity of mind. But for me I was just beginning to feel the stimulus of the situation.

Imbrie wasn't dead in any sense of the word, and I was on my way across frozen Westchester to see him. He was married, that was all, and consequently I was on my way to see the new wife as well.

And here an engulfing curiosity received my spirit. Mrs. Imbrie—what, who and why was she? I had never heard him speak of a woman with any other emotion than his invariable impersonal reverence, and most of us had come to accept him as a man sufficient unto himself. Where had he met her? What was she like? How little or much did she understand and appreciate him? How much had she changed in him? That was the most my curiosity could do for me, however—to embark me upon a sea of fruitless speculation. I should know at least some of these things as soon and no sooner than was materially possible.

Dear Imbrie! He was waiting for me at the bare little station, one hand on the reins of his bell-jingling horse and the other stretched out in a characteristic gesture of generous welcome. I climbed into the thicket of robes in the sleigh at his side, almost stunned

by the sudden blow of the cold, and in another moment we were lightly and musically slipping across the white distance to his home.

Imbrie was talkative, not nervously, but with a certain serene ease which was so lavish as to suggest, to my skeptical eye, artificiality. I found myself quite inanely trying to analyze his inflections, pauses and merriness, as if I had put him into a retort, and expected to find in the result just what ingredients went to his making. Of course, being a simple, ordinary man, with no power of extracting gold from sea-water, I gathered nothing of any value from his flow of words—that is, nothing that gave any relief to my curiosity. He spoke once only of his wife, saying that she had complained all day of a nervous headache—the wind affected her always in this way—and that he was not at all certain she would appear that evening. It gave me a curious dual sense of relief and disappointment, the latter because of my natural interest to see her, and the former for a variety of reasons, such as my inborn reluctance to meeting strangers, and the acknowledged homesickness for an evening alone with Imbrie as of old. I think on the whole the curiosity fairly outweighed the other feeling, and that I was glad with an unmixed gladness when, as Imbrie left me at the gate, telling me cheerily to “go right in,” and that he would follow as soon as he had “taken the horse around,” I saw her standing in the open doorway as I went up the crunching path of snow.

There was something—as I look back on it now I realize—something really magnificent in the way she pretended not to know me. Of course she was ready. She had known I was coming—and did that, I wondered, account for the possible absence prepared for by the nervous headache? And yet I admired her as she did it, with such a grace, with such an effortless grace. There came to my mind the many times, in playing chess, that I had, at the last moment of choosing a move, done that one thing which I had de-

cided at the outset was certain death, and I gave her the unspoken tribute to a superior poise when I saw that she had settled upon her policy, and even in the last nervous seconds had carried it calmly through.

Imbrie was upon us almost immediately, and we went into the darkening library for warming tea and friendliness. Oddly enough, although it was he who was of such supreme importance, he seemed to take unending interest in my affairs and those of Loew, and Dominick, and Myers, and all the rest of us, and I found myself answering instead of asking questions.

Mrs. Imbrie had served me with tea and lighted the lamp, and Imbrie had stirred the fire and flung down a new log upon it, and I was still unable, without the assistance of his queries, to carry any sentence to its logical and necessary end. If she noticed how completely I had given way to the inundation of amazement on seeing her, she gave no sign. Imbrie gave no sign. When he came back to his chair next mine after mending the fire she gave him his own cup, which she had been patiently holding, and as their hands touched their eyes went to one another with a look of indescribable devotion. I felt so suddenly thrown off, so outside the orbit of their glorious day, that I repressed with difficulty a rudimentary desire to go away and leave them to themselves. How kindly Imbrie brought me back to them again!

When tea-time passed and dressing-time separated us I was relieved, as of a shortness of breath, to be alone again. I wanted to think—there was no denying it, and yet what in the world did I want to think about? What was to profit me a debate within myself as to whether or not Imbrie knew what I knew—almost any man but Imbrie would have known—whether she had told him or no, whether before or after his declaration of dependence, whether, whether, whether! Why should I want to know these things, and yet how could

I help wanting to know them? Indeed, my yielding to the allurements of these wonderments nearly cost me the disgrace of being late to dinner, and I came hurrying down just as Imbrie was mouthing for his second hello.

Mrs. Imbrie did not take wine with us. And yet that in itself was admirably in harmony with the rest. She was simply, beautifully lovely in her snowy fichu and soft gray gown—almost puritanic. And yet she escaped, by the force of just that frank simplicity, making too grotesque the contrast in her apostasy.

I had come down in considerable distress of mind, fearing that I was about hopelessly to repeat my heaviness and gaucherie of the twilight hours; but whether because of her own inspiring bravery or our combined love for Imbrie, we rose to him, she and I, and went with him through the dinner-space in equal triumph.

Yes, for we did combine our love for him. It was, alas! the only bond that held us close. It came down just precisely to that, I could see, and all the perplexities and complications of the new order were to be put to this one test for their solution. In itself it created a new item of mystery, for whether she made the effort to save him from knowing, or to help him in bearing an accepted cross, was what I could not of course discover.

She was not brilliant, by any means. She could not at times at all hold her place with Imbrie in his forked-lightning conversation. But she had an abounding charm, and she listened artfully. She was indeed so quietly delightful that I caught myself on the verge of giving place to an insane doubt of her identity. Was she, after all, the same woman? Might it not be just one of those miraculous fabled resemblances? I took her in as she sat at the end of the table opposite to Imbrie, with her white, fine hand with its one ring—one ring! upon the white, fine cloth, her hair catching so girlishly at the flickering light, and her candid eyes upon his face. The idea

of my possible mistake grew fast upon me, and my heart warmed with the feast and the pretty hope that leaped in one. It was the mature form of the childish "Let's pretend" that covers all deficiencies and removes all unpleasant impossibilities. At one light, easy gesture it swept away the wretched sickness of my soul and left me heart-light and happy. Of course it was a mere resemblance.

Imbrie couldn't, simply couldn't have married as I feared. His love for what was pure in man, woman and world would have opened his eyes to that which was unworthy. His sensitiveness would have made it impossible for this flagrancy to pass undetected, for his sensitiveness was greater even than his innocence.

And so in the spell of the glorified hour I put it all from me.

Imbrie sat, long-legged and extended beside the table, puffing rings of smoke into the genial air between sips of golden cordial, and his delicious voice was mellow with his happiness. At least I think it was his happiness, but it might quite readily have been my own. Mrs. Imbrie did not leave us when smoking-time came. In fact, she rather persistently stayed, as if, somehow, skilfully she kept herself between us. I did not think of this at the time. But I did remember it afterward, that since she had met me at the door Imbrie and I had not been left alone one moment.

It was an evening that will go always with me in my memory for dear things. We stayed at the table until long after midnight. Mrs. Imbrie glowed radiantly through the misty room, like some refulgent personification of bridal happiness. I could scarcely take my eyes from her strange, from her familiar face. And it seemed sometimes that she was studying mine—though that may have been fancy.

I have said that I put it all from me. I did, in the pitifully lightsome way we have when the exhilaration of the evening hours is fairly swimming in our veins. It is not always wine. The black sky, the look of tall trees

patient in the darkness, the mysterious touch of the eastern midnight breeze, the sense of going with the earth to meet the largely dawning sun—these things have lifted me as easily into that realm of aloofness where one is so divorced from the lesser day. But on this night it was the wine, wine of my glass and wine of Imbrie's presence, and all my burdens fell from me.

When I woke in the morning I knew quite before I was awake that I had returned to the inferior hours of breakfasting and plain, prosaic day. I deliberately sought to evade it. But the vague sleepy sense of something disagreeable to be faced, some horrid problem that refused to be set aside unsolved, grew in its strength to a very weary-hearted and alert comprehension of what the day was promising.

The cold of my bath added resentment to the irritation. Why in the name of all that was prophetic had I come? Why should I have placed myself in this abominable predicament? Why wasn't I at my own homely little quarters, grieving at Imbrie's silence and unaware of all its unthinkable advantages?

By the time I was ready to go down to breakfast I was in so bad a temper that I had positively to sit down in my bedroom and reason myself into a presentable frame of mind. I finally went out upon the snow-covered balcony that embraced my windows, and let the bitter morning eat its way into my mood. I went down then tingling with the cold and more possessed of my usual philosophic evenness of mind.

Mrs. Imbrie came down directly after me. She was absolutely haggard, and the look of her went to my very heart in hateful confirmation of my suspicions. The easy explanation of a mere resemblance which had seemed so plausible the night before took on the color of a ludicrous insanity in these unlighted hours. She had not slept. It was written all over her. And the reason for her wakefulness—her anxious wakefulness her

face declared—came to me as promptly as if she herself had frankly told me. She had been wondering if I were going to tell.

The issue between us two assumed such proportions, at least in my own eyes, that even Imbrie became dwarfed by it and accounted for naught when he joined us at the table. Just what we had been saying, just what we then said, I have not the slightest notion. It did not seem the same room, the same table, the same trio of the night before. Stripped of all the lures of candle-light and watching spirits that walk only at dusk, the very atmosphere was void and comfortless.

There began for me the most unbearable hours I think, I hope, I shall ever have to live. Every slow minute was full of misery, miseries that fairly twisted in their effort to inflict a greater pain. Do what I could, turn where I might, avoid it as I vainly tried to do, the unbanishable conviction haunted me with a grisly insistence. I thought that Imbrie ought to know.

The morning hours, as I looked forward to them, bid fair to be impossibly dreadful. The leisure of a Sunday morning is bound to be distinctly charming or distinctly irksome—at least I have ever so found it. But in this particular situation I dreaded it. What in the world were we going to do with ourselves?

Imbrie was the only salvation. Happy, radiant and full of the brisk impulse of the air, he suggested a walk toward the Hudson. I assented gratefully. And then my eyes flew to Mrs. Imbrie. Yes, there was the dreadful line across her brows again.

"What will you do with yourself, honey, while we are gone?" said Imbrie, and all the torture of the woman's heart was laid before his blind and smiling eyes as she answered with a bitter truthfulness: "I do not know, I do not know."

In a little more we were out, Imbrie and I, forging against the whipping wind across the thick soft snow. I tried to drink in his mood, but could

not. Under cover of his buoyancy I kept repeating to myself: "Why should you have come? Why should you have come?" Would Imbrie hate me ever after? Or would he hate me more if at some later day he had to bear a pain I could so much more gently deal him?

I watched the strong, clear color in his icy cheeks, and wondered what he was saying. We walked across the snow, side by side and miles between us. I could put out my hand and touch him. Would it ever be so again? And then a passionate rebellion seethed in my aching heart. I had loved Imbrie many years; we had been Jonathan and David, and I would have laid my two hands on the block rather than do him injury. Why, in God's name, must it be I who, thrust into his presence, should precipitate this horror?

When the ice-fountained Hudson lay suddenly a sparkling cruel thing far, far below us I had a dim suicidal wish that somehow it might intervene in my behalf. Behind me, across the spotless fields, in the house that we had left, I could see the woman walking to and fro, I could trace the line of anguish growing deeper on her forehead, I could count the fierce eternities that tortured her.

My absence of spirit passed for the silence of the wonder-struck with Imbrie, himself quite still. It was only long after, in retrospect, that I saw the marvel of that cold, bright sky, of the glittering walls of the fortress shore across the harmful water.

Then Imbrie turned, blustering with the cold, and swung me toward the home again. We both were silent, walking rather faster than was conducive to desultory talk. What Imbrie was thinking of—perhaps he knew; my mind was with the stricken woman we were going back to. She might have known! She might have known!

And yet she did not. For the question of her white, still face met me just past the door, met me, and fled to his own face and read his eyes. He was so boyish in his gladness to be with her again, and at his first exuberance the

waiting color rushed into her cheeks so violently that I feared for her. But as I followed them into a farther room she turned a little on his arm and looked at me. We both knew, then, knew with a sharp increasing of our pain, both that I would not tell—and that she must.

The day that was passing seemed to last for weeks. I could not look at Imbrie but that my heart grew big with womanish weakness. I could not look at her but that I cursed myself for being there at all. It seemed so all my fault. Suppose I had not come—Imbrie and she would have gone on, perhaps for all the rest of life, in their paradise. There came to me a line of old philosophy—what you don't know doesn't hurt you. I think my nurse said it sometimes to me when I was little, and I had always thought it rather silly. I understood it better now.

There was a craving in me to be happy, to have them happy, miraculously to eliminate all the slow foundation of these hideous walls that bid fair to imprison us from the light of day forever. I sat huddled over the fire in what was called the library—as if the whole house were not that! Vague chasms like sleepy jaws yawned and mouthed in the blaze. The subtle hypnotism of the glowing light penetrated to my inmost misery and robbed it of reason. Why should we all be so unhappy? They loved. The world was a fair place. Why should dead days rise in their ghostly trap-pings to haunt the sweet reality of now?

And so it was, engrossed as I was, that I scarcely knew when Imbrie, hours after, came in and sat beside me, until he said, with his old whimsical way rather buried beneath an eruption from his inmost heart: "I've got to talk about her. May I?"

I moved a little, and laid a hand upon his arm. "Will you?" I said.

He drew a long, hard breath and flung himself back in his chair. I could not see his face as I sat, and his voice came almost impersonally to my

ears. I listened, and I watched the fire.

"In the first place she is so wonderful," said Imbrie's voice, "so full of inconceivable depths and boundless immensities. Men call it masculine; angels, I dare say, call it angelic. It is a quality that women rarely know, a kind of omniscience. It is quite impossible to believe in a time when she was not—do you know what I mean? If she walked slowly through the ages, lived through the varying empires of greatness, she could not be more wise, more quick to understand.

"Of course she has, in her days, suffered. A soul like hers is bound to suffer. It gives itself so vitally into the every moment of its life that weariness and wakefulness and pain are sure to follow. The ignorances and wickedness, as the prayer has it, of a heart like hers must do her infinite hurt, and yet for others, those who understand, they are immeasurably swallowed up in her eternities. I mean, she could almost kill without its taking hold of her reality. She could stand before a judgment of her peers, personally, intimately innocent—wondering how she came there, wondering why that one dark moment should overshadow her whole life. And yet she's so alive to wrong and suffering! She'd go without food to feed a hungry dog. A thin, weary horse in the street will bring her endless days of misery. She will talk of his patience, his willingness, his humbleness, his infinite superiority over the man who goads him on. She cannot bear to see a helpless thing in pain of any kind, mental, moral, physical, imaginary. A neglected garden will hurt her, sharply. She gives a quaint, fond individuality to every plant; she sees it struggling, neglected, lonely, dreaming wistfully of blossoms. She brings the tears into my eyes with her own sweet sympathies for things I never saw before in all my life. She has given me glimpses of her heart that have brought me nearer to the gentleness of Christ, love for the Magdalen, pity for the leper, and with it all she is so simple, such a little child—so un-

stained by the tears that she has had to shed, for of course she's had many things to grieve for. Haven't I? Haven't you?

"Somehow we calmly demand it of women that they go through life even as the lilies of the field, even with the wisdom of the great Immortal. We men can have our blunders, our regrets, our ugly things, and be forgiven, but a woman—no. I don't mean to infer that she stands in need of any forgiveness—not, certainly, from me. I suppose God will mete out His kindly compassion to her for her sins and errors, whatever they may be, but it is certainly not for human beings to judge her. The less we have to do with judging—eh?—the better.

"I haven't had anyone to talk to about her, and so I've rather felt bottled up until you came to listen. Isn't she beautiful? Isn't she wonderful? I wish to heaven I were an artist. What a joy it would be to re-create that face, the pure, straight brow, the deep blue eyes and the tender mouth. I'd like to paint her with the look she wears when she is grieving for some helpless thing, paint her with all the brooding yearning in her eyes and lips and call it 'Kindliness.' I never knew the meaning of the word until I saw her try to make a poor lost dog forget the months of cruelty he had endured. And when at last he crept, all shuddering, to her feet she looked like some rare angel bending down. We were in town a little while ago, just for a night or so, and, going through a dark side street, a woman passed us with some horrid words. I tried to get her away as quickly as I could, but do you know she bade me wait and turned back and spoke to the girl—for she was a girl in years. I couldn't—wouldn't have heard a word she said; but waited, as she asked me, and presently she came back with her arm around the poor creature, who was sobbing in a dreadful, unmasterable way. She's here now, working for my wife; waits on her like a slave, follows her like an animal.

"It's everywhere like that. Her day

is always marked with some sweet kindness. Her spirit surely has the gift of healing in its wings. Everyone she meets, everyone who needs her, is the better, happier and braver for knowing her. She's doing things for me you couldn't believe, pulling the weeds out of my soul's garden with gentleness. For—yes, she is even tender to the weeds, you know. She says she does not understand, but that of course they had no choice but to be weeds. She has an understanding patience that is positively godlike, and my reverence for her grows day by day. I think she is more nearly holy than any creature living. No—well, it isn't saying much. But she is holy, sacred to me, sacred to me—my wife."

His voice ceased for a moment, not as if he had finished, but as if the spell of his adoration held him speechless for a space. But he was not to continue. The maid came to the door quietly, but forever an interruption. Imbrie turned his head dreamily.

"A telegram, sir."

"It's for you," said Imbrie.

Taking it I read it heavily. "It's from the office. Von Briesen is ill; Loew wants me to return if possible."

"But no!" said Imbrie urgently.

"I think I really must," I said. "I'll come again, you know. The force is short, anyway. Loew wouldn't have sent unless he needed me."

"But you'll wait for dinner?"

"Oh, I must go now," I answered, moving toward the door to impress upon him my finality. "There'll be a train?"

"There's only one," said Imbrie, pulling out his watch. "We've just barely time to make it, if go you must. I never did like Loew."

I laughed a little, but had reached the door.

"I'll get the sleigh," said Imbrie, despondently aroused.

I packed my things up hastily and went again below stairs. Mrs. Imbrie had been waiting for me in the hallway. Her haggard eyes looked rather the heavier as if with tears, and they were heavy, too, with something from within. In some way she seemed quite silently to give me leave to speak. I went to her and took her hands.

"Don't tell him," said I brokenly.

She lifted up her eyes to me. "I have," she said.

I turned away. She led me to the door. "He thinks he has forgiven me," she said. "How can it be? Whenever he is silent shall I not scourge myself with doubts? Whenever I am sad will it not come to him anew? I cannot look tomorrow in the face."

"Could you forgive, if it were he?"

"My God, a million sins!"

"Are you so much the more compassionate?"

"No, no," she said.

The noise of bells came tinkling to our ears. We stepped out into the gathering dusk. Far off across the snow hills there was a band of royal crimson in the sky.

"There was an island," said I, "in an ancient sea, called Delos. It had no anchorage, but slipped about with every tide, drifting and wandering homelessly. But when Apollo had been born within its shore Delos became fixed, sheltering the glory of a god, and it was sacred evermore, filled with a deathless light."

She looked at me with fairly parted lips. "Oh, if I dared believe!" she said.

Imbrie halloed to me across the dim space. I started forward. "Believe," I said, "love will do much, and this man loves you."

I heard her voice whispering behind me as I hurried down to him: "There was an island in an ancient sea, called Delos. Ah, if I only dared believe!"



CUPID'S GOOD HUNTING

HE was stretched at his ease in the shade of a tree,
Beside him were piled his arrows and bow,
He was—well, décolleté to a shameful degree,
And the talk that ensued I have set forth below.

"Good morning, friend Daniel." He nodded his thanks.

"I've a question—it's lucky we met in this way:
When you're after us mortals and up to your pranks,
What game, sir, is most satisfactory to slay?"

"Young girls or gray grannies, bent double with age?
For you needn't deny you get after them, too;
The serf or the seigneur? The clown or the sage?
Adonis, or Cræsus, or little Boy Blue?"

"Mere years do not matter," he said. "Age or youth,
It's all one to me, with the average steady;
But when I want sport—and I tell you the truth—
I hunt in the ranks of those married already."

WARWICK JAMES PRICE.



A CERTAIN SIGN

DYER—I just saw the ambulance go by. I wonder what's up?
DUELL—Scawcher must be out with his automobile.



MIGHT HAVE KNOWN THAT

FIRST OFFICE-BOY—Haven't you anything to do?
SECOND OFFICE-BOY—Of course I have. If I didn't have something to do
I wouldn't be so busy not doing it.

THE BRAVE OLD WAY

I SAY risk all for one warm kiss;
 I say 'twere better risk the fall.
 Like Romeo, to venture all,
 And boldly climb to deadly bliss.
 I like that savage, Sabine way;
 What mighty minstrel's came of it!
 Their songs are ringing to this day,
 The bravest ever sung or writ.
 Their loves the love of Juliet,
 Of Portia, Desdemona, yea,
 The old true loves are living yet;
 And we, we love, we weep, we sigh
 In love with loves that will not die.

Then take her, lover, sword in hand,
 Hot-blooded and red-handed; clasp
 Her sudden, stormy, tall and grand,
 And lift her in your iron grasp
 And kiss her, kiss her till she cries
 From keen, sweet, happy, killing pain.
 Aye, kiss her till she seeming dies;
 Aye, kiss her till she dies, and then,
 Why, kiss her back to life again!

JOAQUIN MILLER.



THE FINAL TASK

MANAGER—Is that musical comedy of yours all ready?

PLAYWRIGHT—Yes; all that needs to be done is to have you remove the plot.



"JONES has spent a lot of time and money over his new country house,
 hasn't he?"
 "Yes; it fairly reeks with architecture."

THE MASTIFF

By Willard French

TWO men, crossing Iowa Circle, in Washington, paused for a moment by the rose-granite base about the equestrian bronze of General Logan, their backs toward the bronze.

They walked with that deliberate mastery of mind over matter which peculiarly marks the real American statesman. One of them might have been a visiting governor or an ambassador home on a holiday. No one seemed to know him. The other everyone knew. He was the best known man in the country, the leading member of the Cabinet and unquestionably the next Chief Executive.

His hair was glistening white—not yellow-white or the fine floss-white of age, but crisp, curling, scintillating white. It made a marked setting for his perfect complexion, warm cheeks and quick, dark eyes, while it emphasized the poise of a head that was worthy of the broad shoulders and full chest. A strong, ungloved hand pointed as he said:

"That is the house, John—the small one, with the gable and high balcony. I never approach it without a shudder. I never turn away without a sigh. It was my Valley of Hinnom. That second-story room with the three windows saw me through a tragedy which wrenched me from the gate of hell."

"Then you must have been glad to get out of it and into the other," his friend remarked, his words wrapped in diplomatic velvet. "At present you have one of the finest homes in Washington. You will be sorry to leave that one even for eight years in the White House."

Unheeding, the other repeated: "I never look toward it without remorse or away without regret. I would rather go back there, John, and be nothing but the husband of my wife than to go to the White House."

"There is sarcasm in Destiny. When you were there perhaps you thought you would rather go to the White House than be the husband of any woman living," his friend replied, smiling, and was surprised by the other's prompt reply.

"I did," he said, and they walked on, up Rhode Island avenue, down Fourteenth street and out Massachusetts avenue, toward "one of the finest homes in Washington."

Presently the senator was saying: "You are wrong, John. A man's wife is not always everything or nothing to him. I do not refer to century-gold-beetles who catch butterflies. Their lexicon of domesticity is Greek to me. I mean real men and real wives. Sometimes, I suppose, a woman may become nothing to the man who loves her, through exaggerated notions of herself and a selfish determination as to precisely the kind of wife she proposes to be; but I think that the failures made of marriage are mostly due to men."

His friend smiled gravely and concurred. "Men are a bad lot when you take them out of common sense and let them loose in sentiment—Hyde or Jekyll, according to the way of the wind."

"No, no, not so bad as that," the other said. "No one ever went wider of the mark who still kept the mark in sight than did Louis Stevenson. No

living man, John, can be, interchangeably, Hyde and Jekyll, *facile princeps* and *par excellence*. All that you can say is that there are tendencies to Hyde in every Jekyll and inclinations to Jekyll in every Hyde. God bless the wives who have the wit and wisdom to save the men they love, instead of setting them adrift when the other fellow in them goes to pulling them astray."

They were passing under the ivy-covered arch when the glass door was opened by a negro and a radiant woman stepped out upon the marble, waiting, smiling, with a kiss for her husband and a hand for his guest. It was most unparliamentary, but so real as to be almost divine, and as the stranger bent, reverently, over the hand, he was wondering what such a man, with such a wife, could know of the abstract meaning, even, of words like tragedy and the gate of hell.

II

It is on the sunny side of Iowa Circle, a little place, low and brick, wedged between two higher buildings which make it look even smaller than it is; but it is rather pretty and has an individuality and artistic sense which the others lack.

It is better now, in some respects, than it used to be, for it has recently been renovated and modernized. A dozen or more years ago it was decidedly behind the times and the rent was accordingly low.

The rent and individual picturesqueness overcame the shortcomings in the mind of the new senator's wife, who was the executive of home, and the little place, as it was in those days, became the abode of the Hon. William Roberts when he was elected to the United States Senate.

He had served a term in the House of Representatives as a boy bachelor and, sadder and wiser, had gone home again to Maganaw, to a golden law practice, resolved to lay up a fortune before he ever again dived in national politics.

He married the girl whom he had always intended to marry and was beginning to coin money, when there came an unexpected and undesired demand for him to represent his State in the Senate. He assured his wife that no mortal could be a senator on a senator's salary, yet she advised him to accept.

She believed that there were infinite possibilities in her husband which he could realize if the wheels of home could only be run so smoothly that he should never be aware that they turned at all, and after carefully considering each detail she believed that there lay in her the executive ability to do it. She made him the business proposition that, for his private purposes and political exigencies, he rely upon what was already laid by and what might accrue through occasional law matters, while she took the salary, supplying everything and paying all the bills.

Upon that basis she advised him to accept. For longer than he could remember—even in the making of mud pies—he had looked to her for advice and had usually acted upon it. He accepted the nomination.

So scrupulously was the compact kept that during twelve years of senatorial life the Hon. William Roberts never heard a word concerning household affairs or bills. None of the prescribed necessities of senatorial dignity were lacking, and that his wife was rather closely confined, rather modestly gowned, rather retiring when it came to social functions, seemed to him only to indorse his wisdom in marrying a good, plain, sensible girl.

One single moment of his life excepted, he had never given her a thought in the line of personal charms. Had anyone questioned him he might even have said that she had none. He had always intended to marry her; in fact, he had never thought of marrying anyone else, simply because she was so obviously intended for him. She always understood him before he understood himself. She always inspired him to higher ideals than he could even see, alone. Had anyone ventured to

ask him if he loved his wife he would certainly have said, "Of course I love her." And of course he did, in an honest, commonplace kind of way, with infinite confidence.

He did not care, himself, for elaborate social functions. He usually went to them alone, because his wife insisted that it was his duty to himself, to his future and to his constituents.

They were happy. They had no Wilderness, therefore no Pisgah, no bent-backed plodding toward some Promised Land. They were happy, yet not *very* happy.

During the first years the senator always kissed his wife when he left the breakfast table, which was usually their parting for the day, and for years she waited for him at the door, when he returned, to welcome him with a kiss; until the returning became very irregular and something admonished her quick feminine perception that there was a perfunctory touch in the return of her greeting. And through these earlier years, beside a fire in the senator's library, two chairs, socially drawn, were placed, and here the two good friends spent many evenings together.

While the senator smoked his wife read aloud from the *Congressional Record*, and in a quiet way they talked politics and discussed problems. Many of his best thoughts, which seemed to slip spontaneously from his lips on the floor of the Senate, were born and nursed by that open fire, and the senator was never slow in acknowledging the indebtedness to his wife.

He rose phenomenally in the Senate, but subtly, after all; by an "insinuous hypnotism," someone said, and there was some truth in the statement. He was not an angular, awkward, preposterous genius, from whom one would know at a glance that there must come something fabulous—or nothing. He was an exceptionally handsome man, and he possessed the strength of an athlete; yet this power was so veiled beneath an atmosphere of languor as to give one an impression,

when he was sitting, that it would be almost too much of an effort for him to rise. His heavy brows had the same languorous way of seeming to rest on half-closed eyelids.

The difference between the romance and the reality of the man was aptly delineated in a New York office, where the counsel and advisers in an important corporation case were considering the personnel of the opposition. One of them remarked: "They have pulled in a big, handsome, sleepy fellow, Senator Roberts of Maganaw, for the handle on his name, I suppose. He evidently doesn't know enough about law or care enough about the case to keep awake. He leaned back in his chair as though he were in a private box at the Opera. Upon my word, I half expected to hear him snore!"

Someone who knew replied: "If Billy Roberts of Maganaw is on the other side, and if he really falls asleep, take my advice and for God's sake don't wake him up."

When Roberts spoke the words were like the man—graceful and languid, but powerful. The stranger's first impression was that it was a separate burden for him to speak each word and that to listen long would be impossible. The senator himself never appeared to be paying much attention to what he said; yet in a moment the stranger found himself listening as never before in his life—with a sense of crowding his wits and urging every latent energy to the task, as though the man were talking too rapidly for one to comprehend.

There was another quality, which became evident only with time. A dozen might have spoken during the afternoon, but of them all only one speech needed no reference to refresh the memory. What Senator Roberts said seemed unforgettable. The qualities upon which his wife had fixed her faith made him more than a leader on his own side of the chamber—they made him a terror to the other side.

The lobbies and restaurants, the cloak-rooms and corridors emptied of members and the wine-colored arm-

chairs behind the crescents of little desks filled quickly when Senator Roberts had the floor. He had such a quiet, drowsy way of making most profound and startling statements that they never seemed profound or startling till one read them in the *Record* next morning.

The opposition very soon discovered that only by watching every syllable could they manage to insert discordant questions, disquieting, a little at least, the even tenor of his convincing arguments.

More and more the ablest and quickest of the opposition felt under party obligations to assail Senator Roberts at every paragraph, to tangle, twist, torment him—anything to throw him off the track of that deliberate, subtle monotone.

But they were like fox terriers about a mastiff. The thought is not original; it is borrowed from cartoons in which Senator Roberts figured as the mastiff—so charged with partisan necessities that, often though they fell floundering, the laughing-stock of the galleries and even of the sedate Senate itself, despite the gavel of the president *pro tem.*, they were up again and at it, so long as power to bark was left in them.

Often they were too eager to snap a sentence to wait for the parliamentary inquiry, from the chair, if the senator from Maganaw would yield to the senator from somewhere else; but whether in or out of order, the senator from Maganaw always yielded, dropping the sentence where it stood, with a drowsy "Certainly," and stood like an uninterested schoolboy, receiving the assaults and upsetting the assailants till the storm subsided. Then he would return to the break, repeat the unfinished sentence and wander slowly along with his original argument as though nothing had occurred to interrupt.

No one ever saw Senator Roberts ruffled, physically or mentally; but ruffled he was, and so near to exasperation that, one evening by the open fire, he said: "If the opposition don't stop that yawping every time I try to speak I'll quit the Senate and go back

to law. It's confoundedly comfortable to be able to finish what you have to say after you take the trouble to begin. They grow worse every session."

The senator's wife looked up from the *Record*, in which she had been reading aloud of some of those interruptions, but she looked no farther than the coals. She never looked into her husband's eyes when they sat talking together. She alone knew why, for she alone knew how it made her heart throb and her lips quiver; how words, such different words, came crowding to take the place of the cold things which she must say on the subjects which interested him, if she looked into his eyes. The only time she ever really looked was when he came to kiss her, after breakfast; and when the senator forgot and the custom ceased, much as she missed it, she was almost glad; she had been in such daily danger of betraying herself to the man she loved.

She looked into the fire and her soft voice said: "Yes, it must be very annoying, Billy dear."

"Damnably!" said the senator.

Very gently—she always spoke so softly—his wife continued: "It's very suggestive. It is one of the pleasantest of comments, isn't it?—these increasing interruptions."

"H'm!" said the senator; and the silence stretched out till he added:

"Look at Senator Bumpus's speech. Two hours and not a whisper."

"Yes. It glides along like blank verse."

"Why not? They let him alone."

"He read it, I suppose?"

"Yes. From *Record* proof-sheets."

"Do you think it very original and strong, Billy dear?"

"Strong as water and a rhythmic rehash of established facts. They stopped me untold times while I was establishing them. But when he set the same things to music they wouldn't have dropped a pin for fear of hearing it. Just look through last week's *Record* and you'll see the time I had saying those very things."

"Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown," Billy dear; but it wears it.

I've seen it all in the *Record*. The only thing that I miss there is the gestures. Sometimes they are so funny. There ought to be some way of printing them. Do you ever gesticulate, Billy dear, when you are excited?"

"It's too much trouble to get excited, Maude. I'm too conservative."

A low laugh rippled over the coals and up the chimney as the senator's wife replied: "The conservative is just the man to get excited. He is conservative because he's too cowardly to fight and too lazy to run, and there's nothing else to do but get excited. You'll never be caught in that predicament, Billy dear; but I'm glad if you don't bother about gestures. Some day I mean to muster courage to steal into the gallery when you are to speak. So far I daren't so much as even look toward the Capitol on days when you are intending to address the Senate. One day—I never told you of it, it was so silly—I was in the gallery when, all of a sudden, you stood up. There was fight in your face. I could see it. I thought I should faint. But someone mercifully shut you off just long enough to let me steal away."

"What furious work even some of the brightest men in the Senate do make with their hands and coat-tails! And then the way they slap their hands as if they were catching flies or mosquitos. One would think that the very dignity of the situation would keep them still. Did Senator Bumpus gesticulate?"

"He didn't lift a finger, except twice to flick his glasses off and have a look about, to see if anyone was listening."

"Of course not. He has the art of oratory better than any man in the Senate. The only trouble with him is that anything but a flood of eloquence, from his lips, must flow from some other soul. It must be a rehash or nothing, so no one is afraid of him."

"It isn't so much the interruption, Maude, as it is the way a fellow must make a fool of himself, trying to answer their questions. They are so

beastly irrelevant, most of them," the senator muttered.

III

FROM time untold men far enough affront to be recognized have found that the pen was mightier than the sword, and have dreaded the power of the pencil more than both. A good cartoon will prosper in the work it is to do better than all the editorials, campaign documents and shafts of oratory ever launched upon the sea of sentiment.

The *Weekly Search-Light* realized this fact and made itself the tremendous power it was by setting its policy wisely, making its selections shrewdly and securing, at a salary sufficient to retain, every thoroughly brilliant cartoonist the moment that he proved himself to be the man they needed. If they did not use him they silenced him.

Strebor, an artist not unknown in oils, had been on the staff of the *Search-Light* longer than the senator had been in Washington, and very early in the brilliant career which each was effecting in his sphere the artist discovered the senator, and from his hiding-place made a careful study of him.

Modestly, at first, never too frequently, but with constantly increasing boldness and prominence, as the senator rose, Strebor's cartoons followed close after him. So closely they followed him that the senator sometimes admitted to his wife that the cartoons were really ahead of him, pulling him into unearned and undeserved prominence.

"I don't believe it would be possible, Billy dear," his wife replied. "The world would know it at once if a cartoon tried to make you bigger than you really are. It would not only fall into its own fulsomeness but it would pull you in after it. You would hear from it soon enough, if anyone thought you were a pet of the *Search-Light*. The fact that there is

nothing of the kind seems to me good evidence that those who know you—your importance, I mean—much better than you know, are quite sure that the cartoons are well on the safe side."

"Well, I am more afraid of that man Strebor than I like to be, and I wish that he would let me alone," the senator muttered. "I know that he has helped me along tremendously, whether the world is aware of it or not; and I know, too, what will happen when I do something which he misconstrues or disapproves. His name has become a guaranty and he knows altogether too much about present political questions to be safe. Some fine day he will turn against me and, as great as his building up has been, so great will be the fall of it."

The senator's wife sat caressing the edge of the fender with the toe of one slipper, supported on the toe of another.

"Billy dear," she said, "when you are in the Senate or a court-room your optimism stands at the small end of a telescope and sees everything. Here in this renaissance of domesticity you take all the pessimism in you to the large end of the telescope—and still you see everything."

"You know as well as I, Maude, that but for the *Search-Light*, and those who have taken hints from it, my name would not be known outside of Maganaw and Washington."

"Whose would, Billy dear, but for the newspapers?"

"Newspapers are harmless as thunder, whereas Strebor's cartoons are straight lightning. I would rather be cursed by some newspapers than blessed by them if I were hunting for good advertising; but a few shafts from Strebor would kill the best man in the country."

"Well, you are that man, Billy dear, and for my part I'm glad that Strebor knows it," his wife replied. "These smoke-dreams of yours in that armchair are only mechanical mixtures, while we must believe that the *Search-Light* is working with real chemical compounds."

A peculiar silence fell about the open fire. The senator's wife would have been loath to disturb it for any less excuse than that the house was falling down. She knew those silences instantly, but she never understood them. She never knew the depth or shallowness of what she said, while she smothered the dream-thoughts thrilling and throbbing in her to fly to the man she loved. Afterward, when she found some word of hers woven into grave debate or resounding oration—even coming back sometimes in all the *éclat* of campaign slogans—the broken bits of things which, of themselves, had slipped from her lips, there by the open fire, she felt a strange pride.

Many a time the senator called her attention to the thefts, remarking: "That was yours, Maude. It was too good to lose, so I stuffed it." And she replied: "Send the bouquets to the taxidermist, Billy dear; they don't belong to me. Mechanics are forever making things which are of no possible value except in the hands of those who understand the use of them."

Presently the senator was leisurely puffing his cigar again. The room was as still as before, but his wife knew that the silence had been broken and her soft voice said to the fire:

"It is not the wit but the fact in a cartoon which gives it power. The sugar-coating makes one laugh, but it is the truth which is spoken in jest that takes effect. The wit only opens the pores for the microbe of stern reality. The microbe must be there or the public mind will never be seriously infected by the innocuous virus permeating a cartoonist's agony. There is more to it than the irresponsible hypnotism of humor, Billy dear."

"Then I really resemble a mastiff, do I, Maude?" the senator asked, flicking the ashes from his cigar in a way that was perilously like a gesture.

He asked it because, from the very outset, Strebor had clung persistently to that presentment; so persistently

that at last, in any cartoon under heaven, even in England and Germany, the mastiff stood for Senator Roberts as plainly as the tiger meant Tammany, the elephant the G. O. P. and the poor little ass meant Democracy.

With her low laugh the senator's wife replied: "Billy dear, you do not resemble a mastiff. No; I am not quite fond enough of dogs for that. That is only the funny part of it. The microbe that gives force to Strebor's fancy is the fact that after all you really are a mastiff—a great big mastiff; the *canis major* of the Senate; the bright dog-star of the party's constellation; Sirius, the first, fixed star in the nation's firmament! And if that is not being a dog, Billy dear, pray tell me what is it?"

"I'm overwhelmed in fulsomeness, Maude. I give it up," the senator said, throwing his cigar in the fire and going into another room.

Nevertheless, at uncertain intervals the Strebor cartoons continued. The mastiff still made his apt appearances and the senator continued to tremble lest a change come over the spirit of the cartoonist's dreams.

After a contest which he waged, as champion of the administration, over a measure which he finally carried to successful conclusion in the face of vicious and frantic opposition, in which he was himself mercilessly assailed with every form of insinuation permitted by parliamentary usage, even to the very tap of the president's gavel, the mastiff appeared in the full-page of the *Search-Light*, stretched comfortably on the ground, sound asleep, his nose resting on the bill. About him stood a rampant array of terriers, with the features of those senators who had been most prominent in their attacks. Their tails were in every state of twist- edness. Their ears were dilapidated and they were halt and maimed, but barking furiously. Beneath it were the words: "Be careful, sonny, that you don't wake him up."

An international measure requiring the utmost delicacy and caution came

before the Senate. Ill-advised expressions were in grave danger of precipitating war; but a national election was approaching. To entangle the administration was too great a temptation and a natural obstructionist introduced a resolution, equally regardless of the impossibility of its passing and of the effect of its contention on the foreign country, simply because it opened a door for political pyrotechnics on the part of some of his colleagues who commanded brigades of able-bodied grudges and battalions of campaign hopes.

No material harm could come to the administration from a little fresh vituperation. The party was practically as sure of the coming election as the senators were that the resolution could not pass; but its discussion not only delayed action upon a measure which, internationally, it was most expedient to have quickly and unanimously settled, but the sentiments which would be expressed, for partisan purposes, were sure to convey a false impression to the foreign country, increasing the grave danger which the administration was most anxious to avoid.

Senator Roberts may have been asleep when the resolution was offered, but he was on his feet before the clerk had finished reading it.

"Mr. President, I object to discussion upon such a resolution," he said. "I cannot prevent it. I only wish that I could. It is a purely partisan attack upon the administration, and as such it cannot accomplish anything. The danger in its discussion is to an ignorant people, far away from us, already in an excited state, who will be inspired by false hopes that they can obtain help from this body in their present contention. No senator in this chamber would vote to give them support, if that were the resolution; and if the senators who are anxious to dispense their partisan eloquence, in silver speech, through the megaphone of this resolution, could be held physically accountable for the result of their words in that other country, there

would be golden silence on the other side of the chamber till this resolution was buried beyond resurrection."

The tirade which forthwith broke about his graying head was as stupendous as the cause for it was paltry. The chief among the fighters of the opposition slapped his hands frantically and exclaimed:

"From my viewpoint I can see no such danger as the senator from Maganaw so graphically prognosticates, and I do not propose to have him stifle me. I do not propose to allow him to dictate to me nor curtail the one inalienable salvation of this sacred chamber—the right of unlimited debate. I propose to discuss this resolution, or some other of a similar nature, in spite of any nefarious measures which may be introduced. I propose to say what I have to say, and say it here, on the floor of the Senate, in spite of the senator from Maganaw and all his cohorts. And I propose to defend my colleagues in that right—to fight for it to the bitter end!"

It was only three days later when the *Search-Light* appeared with the mastiff, his forefeet on a rock, his head erect and his eyes wide open. Down in the grass, only their heads and tails visible, were the rampant terriers. One of them, whose face was unmistakable, was saying to the rest: "I see no such danger as he predicts, and I say, 'Let us bark!' That's what we're here for."

The title of the cartoon was "The Viewpoint." Beneath it the two speeches were printed in full.

IV

For twelve years the lion and the lamb lay down together. The cartoonist did not change his spots nor did the mastiff turn his coat; but if Senator Roberts felt, at the beginning of his career, that he had a monitor worthy of grave consideration, he felt it more with each succeeding year.

A Strebor cartoon became the invariable full-page feature of the *Search-*

Light. Only upon occasions not frequent enough for fulsomefulness did the mastiff predominate. The entire political arena was swept, and its dust—gold dust or debris—was made the pigment for some potent delineation by one whom all admitted held the great political problems of the day in the hollow of his hand and was becoming a cardinal force to be considered by those who would manipulate public matters or party plans.

A senator prominent on the minority side once asserted in the cloak-room: "I would rather suppress the *Search-Light* and blindfold Strebor than gag the senator from Maganaw and silence that whole side of the Senate."

The *Search-Light* heard of it, as it seemed to hear everything. It quoted the senator in heavy type and stated officially that M. Strebor was then receiving a salary of \$12,000 a year, and that the *Search-Light* stood ready to increase it whenever occasion warranted.

Figures in oil by Strebor were also becoming so much the rage that fabulous prices were paid, and even at that more than half the orders he received were declined, through his utter lack of time to fill them.

The mastiff was being caricatured *ad nauseam* by antagonistic journals, but even the senator from Maganaw had come to hold his wife's convictions concerning the innocuous virus of the cartoonist's agony when it lacked the microbe of truth, and looked upon the outside portrayals, whether *pro* or *con*, as amounting to little else than gratuitous advertising. All the more for that, however, he dreaded some change in the *Search-Light*.

On the infrequent occasions, however, when the mastiff appeared it was always at some apt moment when the impressionable but forgetful public could be most forcibly reminded that head and shoulders above his countrymen there stood one man who was trustworthy, brave and strong. But each new evidence only served to strengthen the senator's dread of the time when Strebor should begin to

depict weak points instead; when he should turn his pencil to the task of making a muzzle for the mastiff, putting the beast on a precautionary chain or setting the world agog with a suggestive "Cave Canem" under some cartoon.

Long since, the busy years had swept away the quiet home customs in the little house on Iowa Circle. They had gradually disappeared—simply fallen into desuetude. The two chairs before the fire were rarely occupied. The reading aloud of the *Record* and occasional discussion of contingent problems had long been abandoned, and as domestic matters were never a subject of conversation it came of itself to the conclusion that very little was ever talked about at all.

Nothing was consciously strained in the relations between the senator and his wife. He was simply occupied with his thoughts. He surely had enough to think about, and when he considered the matter at all it was with a sense of gratitude that his wife was not one of the talking kind. It was simply that the pressure of larger affairs had absorbed him and gradually carried him beyond what he conceived to be within her comprehension, so that he had outgrown the habit of consulting with her before the open fire. It was simply this, nothing sudden; nor was there anything doubtful about the transaction which he would rather hide that resulted in the fact that Senator Roberts had never so much as mentioned to his wife a great dream which had been growing in his dozing hours, and had come, by degrees, aided by the demands of certain influential allies, into waking activity as a problem, then as a plan which could undoubtedly be carried through to a successful issue unless—there was one grave, aye, fatal possibility—unless its progress was interrupted by the *Search-Light*. The senator knew, and frankly admitted it to himself, that he should triumph or fail irretrievably according to the whim of Strebor, when he chose to note the setting of the tide.

It was not a position of dependency

which the senator naturally enjoyed; but when he quietly cursed the conditions and reminded himself of his wish, from the outset, that Strebor would let him alone, he turned about and confronted himself with the fact that if Strebor had let him alone the present possibility would never have been his.

There was altogether too much of the mastiff in him to bend gracefully to the rod of one who was stronger. But Strebor was stronger. Strebor could crush him or render his victory sure. It was simply a fact. There was no evading it. It would not avail to consider the matter with his wife, and, having gone so far alone, he felt a kind of pride in completing the conquest before he reported it. Obviously, however, he must get hold of Strebor and have a plain understanding with him before he ventured to take the first step.

With all the delicacy of innate and lifelong diplomacy, Senator Roberts wrote to Strebor, pleasantly referring to many picturesque courtesies of the past, with the hope that he might not forfeit his generous consideration in the future. He trusted that the artist would believe him most anxious to reciprocate, in any way that lay in his power, and would also give him the pleasure of his company at dinner the next time that he was in Washington.

Strebor's reply was not all that the senator had wished. He seemed to read something between the lines. He simply regretted that for purely professional reasons it would be undesirable, both for the senator and for the artist, that they should be personally acquainted.

Possibly the senator read more than the artist intended, but he thought that he detected the reserve of a sometime antagonist. A few days later he heard the cloak-room gossip that a very handsome offer had been made to Strebor to put some bandages, a lame leg and a blind eye on the mastiff.

Irrespective of personal sentiments, the senator saw the obvious necessity of another and more definite letter to Strebor, in which he urged that at least

he be allowed, in some tangible fashion, to show his appreciation of the artist's past consideration.

The reply to this was even more disquieting. Courteously, but plainly, Strebor stated that the *Search-Light* paid him fully for all his work on the paper, so that anything more would be pure gratuity and that "to accept a gift was to dissolve the pearl of independence in the vinegar of obligation; to sell stock in oneself when, no matter how honorable the purchaser, he would own the stock and have an undeniable right to vote upon it."

The senator ground his teeth and tried again to wish that Strebor had let him alone. Then he wished that he had let Strebor alone; till the futility of both appeared, so far as they affected the vital situation, and only the fact remained that the correspondence had made a probability of what before had been but an ugly dream. He was facing the gravest crisis that would be possible in his entire career. It would be rash to foolhardiness to open the door and face the nation till he knew to a certainty the position of the *Search-Light*. It was not cowardice. The brave man hesitates while making up his mind. The coward hesitates afterward.

Senator Roberts was practically sure that Strebor's phenomenal political insight had already detected the move he had in mind, and his letters really did indicate at least the possibility of an effort to checkmate him. If the effort was made he knew that he should fall, in irredeemable ridicule. He was not graphically humorous or by nature artistic; but his brain was working under the inspiration of exigency, and he fancied that he already saw a cartoon upon the artist's table, in which the mastiff was wallowing in the agonies of strangulation, from having tried to swallow the White House.

The time was narrowing and Senator Roberts did what he had never done before except at the grate fire in the little library. He opened the door of his heart a meagre, grudging crack. Forced by dire necessity he wrote again

to Strebor, acknowledging that the desire he had to meet him was, in part, for the opportunity to consult with a man who evidently knew the world and public opinion better than he could, entangled as he was in the meshes of partisanship; that a proposition had been presented to him upon which he had in no way committed himself, concerning which he was anxious to consult with one as intelligent and disinterested as the artist, and also to learn the probable position of the *Search-Light* in the possible contingency. He closed by asking, directly, if this end could not be in some way accomplished.

The reply gave him a profounder respect than ever for Strebor's insight and diplomatic qualities and a greater dread than ever of Strebor's pencil.

The senator honors me more than I deserve, but sincerely, I am sure, and I also feel that, with the same sincerity, he will permit me to say that the plan he has in mind can doubtless be accomplished at the present time, though at the outset it will produce a slight shock, being a little premature; while four years later it will work out its own fulfilment, by natural law, without an effort on the part of his friends and even in spite of them, assuring him a more efficient and unassailable conclusion. In the meantime—a very critical period it promises to be for the country—there is another very important post which ought to be filled by the best man the nation can produce and can be so filled only in case the plan which the senator is considering should be temporarily abandoned.

Concerning the *Search-Light*, I may say, emphatically, that it does not and would not wish to lead. It simply tries to follow, faithfully, approving that which is best and denouncing that which is degenerate. It takes no pleasure in combating any honest ambition with the good of the country as its fundamental energy; and it is scarcely conceivable that in this or any other emergency the senator will ever act upon any other basis than his country's welfare.

Senator Roberts read the letter only once and tore it up with deliberate care, as he sat at his desk in the Senate chamber.

That evening he attended a dinner in one of the private rooms of the Willard, where several important political factors met, intending to launch a Presidential boom which promised an easy victory in the approaching convention.

The President was naturally anxious to serve another term. He was particularly anxious as a matter of redeeming the past, in which there was one feature which was being turned seriously against him. Certain international affairs had not been conducted with as much credit to the nation as might have resulted. Those who knew realized that the blame rested chiefly with the Secretary of State, but history would not lift it from the President's shoulders if he were compelled to quit the office under the shadow of a cloud. Otherwise his administration had been exceptionally popular. There was but one man in the country who could carry the convention against him and carry the nation, at the polls, as surely and safely as he. That man was especially distinguished for his tenacious loyalty to his country's honor and for his brilliant diplomatic qualities.

Naturally the President thought of Senator Roberts much as Senator Roberts thought of the policy of the *Search-Light*, and was correspondingly relieved, as some were disappointed and more surprised, when the morning papers, following the dinner at the Willard, printed a brief speech delivered by the senator, in which he said:

I have given the subject, in a general way, in connection with other names, more serious thought than would have been appropriate, hitherto, in connection with my own. The argument is equally applicable. I do not think that any man, today, can wisely distract attention by allowing his name to appear as a possible candidate before the coming convention. There is but one natural candidate. He has the right, pending negotiations and problems that are far from finished and great work that cannot possibly be completed during the present term, to our undivided support and unquestioned loyalty. I believe that the nation will emerge from her present critical position with less friction and with greater honor, at home and abroad, if we unanimously sustain our present Chief Executive. For myself I say, decidedly and finally, that I am not a candidate and will not be a candidate. So far as human foresight can ordain, I shall use my best efforts to insure the re-election of our present President for the ensuing term.

Nothing in Senator Roberts's life welded a stronger link between him

and the hearts of the people or brought him into greater prominence abroad. He saw it all, the moment he read Strebor's letter, and only wondered that he could not have seen it by himself, and saved the humiliation of that correspondence.

The *Search-Light* reported the dinner and the speech, commenting editorially, and, with remarkable celerity, suggesting at least a preconceived notion on the part of the cartoonist, presented a full-page cartoon, entitled: "Where Our Country Needs Her Mastiff More."

The great gable of the State Department end formed a kennel, the head of the mastiff was under the arch, his paw resting on the Portfolio of State. Over the arch was written: "A word to the wise."

V

SENATOR ROBERTS smoked his cigar by the open fire a night or two after the dinner. He knew that his wife had lost her interest in politics, but it would be hard to feel that she had also lost her pride in his career. It had hardly seemed worth while to mention, in advance, the possibility of a nomination, but now that the papers were full of it the senator found himself curious, if not rather hungry, for his wife's opinion.

He smoked his cigar, but received no opinion. With a feeling that something of value had gone from his life he made up his mind that his wife had so thoroughly lost interest in everything that she did not even read the newspapers and actually did not know what had happened. It shocked him; but revolve the matter as he would he could see no other reason for her silence except that, being a woman, she had failed to look ahead four years, and might be disappointed that she had lost the opportunity of living in the White House. It was very unlike her. He could hardly conceive that life as a President's wife could promise any attractive features to one

like her—she was so little given to society.

Until that moment he had never even thought of her as in any way concerned in the consideration. Could it be that she was disappointed in not becoming the first lady in the land?

The first lady in the land! The thought struck him absurdly at first, then uncomfortably. He glanced at his wife. He had never imagined her as in any way a part of his political career. He looked again. She was bending over some needlework. He listened to the click of the needle on the thimble and the zip of the thread. They were delicate and pretty hands. He had never noticed it before, but they were very pretty. There were only two rings. He remembered them both—the wedding ring and the engagement ring. He felt a vague impression that most women wore more than that. At least one woman whom he knew wore more. He remembered her hands distinctly. He had made her a birthday present of a diamond ring only a few days before, and when she thanked him for it, in the evening, he had noticed that her hands fairly flashed with other diamonds. But the hands themselves were not so pretty as those he was watching.

Then he looked at the plain black bodice and narrow white collar. Their simplicity rose to high art, if he could only have appreciated the fact, but he saw only the simplicity. He had always considered his wife as a good, healthy, trustworthy accessory of life—pertaining more to the house than to him.

He had been looking, of late, into another face—a brilliant, colorful, laughing, chatting, red-lipped, tempting, longing-for-something face. On the instant, before he could control himself, the words drove him to compare the two. He was intensely uncomfortable. He shook himself, as a mastiff might, in trying to dislodge something clutching his throat.

His wife always seemed to him at her best when she talked. It was in

an honest desire to bring her up to her best that he said:

"Senator Slocum is slashing the administration mercilessly just now. He is making a strong bid for the leadership of his party."

"I hope he may succeed," his wife replied, without looking up. She was counting stitches. The old "Billy dear" had long been relegated with other home customs of its ilk.

"Why?" asked the senator, half expecting some spiteful reference to the dinner at the Willard, which would give him a hint. But the needle clicked and the thread zipped again as the soft voice replied:

"There is so much of the lethargy of unanimity in your own ranks, just now, that a really clever man, like Cosgrove, might almost manage to slip through the door while your party leaders are holding it open and bowing to one another."

The senator smoked for a moment, wondering if he had caught a spark from the dying fire—not for a moment considering how little opportunity he gave himself, of late, to catch the sparks, even had the fire burned as brightly as long before. At length he said:

"I'm not just sure that Slocum cannot do that little trick himself if he has the opportunity. He has been evincing some rather good material in the Senate of late."

"He has been exhibiting the audacity of his opinions in the chaparral, I know, but when it comes to displaying the courage of his convictions out in the open, he will not be there."

"At any rate, he has been playing rather successfully to the galleries, in a pull for public sentiment."

"But public sentiment is only the snap-shot guess of ignorant and uninformed people," the senator's wife said slowly, straightening a thread with the point of her needle. "The mass of Americans have a way of leaving sentiment at home and expressing public opinion in their judgment at the polls. If Senator Slocum ventures out of the Senate chaparral into the open

and becomes a candidate, I am very sure he will find himself immersed in an eternal quietus."

The needle went on with its clicking and the senator with his thinking. He was a man whose mental harmony was never vexed with vanity. The state of being exceptionally handsome was as natural to him as the state of being white, and he had never given more concern to one than to the other. That the encroachments of Time, thus far, were but the finishing touches of the master's brush to a perfect painting, emphasizing its excellences, simply resulted in the fact that his attention had never been distracted to himself by evidences of old age.

To say that he had lived his life without temptations might lead to misconception; for no man, with even ordinary mental and physical qualities, is ever far from social opportunities for greater or less digression, from the cradle of development to the grave of ambition. But the cannon does not roar where there is no ear to hear. Opportunities are not temptations where the might-be victim is not alert for them. No man ever yet was tempted by anything who did not first put himself in the way of it. So it is true that Senator Roberts had lived his life, till recently, without temptation. His brain had been so busy in its broadening field that he had never considered even his wife as more than a fireside companion and had finally forgotten that.

He might never have known the meaning of the word had it not been that in his legal capacity he had assumed the administration of a large estate, on behalf of a beautiful and ambitious young widow, who was one of the brilliant social lights of Washington.

It would have been impossible for these two not to appreciate each other. It was only a case of cause and effect when prolonged intimacy ripened into—how little, compared with what it might, probably the senator and his beautiful client knew best; how much, compared with what it should, inquisi-

tive servants and gossips may have thought they knew. It was their own affair—surely not ours, at any rate.

The only thing pertinent is that at last Senator Roberts was living in temptation and the effect of it permeated, as it always does, everything. Even as he sat once more in the little library, that wretched phrase persistently returned, and every time he shuddered and thought of the other face, so responsive to the fiendish fire which filled his veins when he looked into it. He ground his teeth, but in spite of every effort to shut it off he thought how different "The First Lady in the Land" would sound and seem to him if—

He threw his cigar impatiently into the fire, and saying that he was to attend the convention committee meeting at the Arlington and should not be back till late, he left his wife bending over her sewing by the open fire.

When the outer door closed behind him, however, the needle ceased its clicking. Slowly the senator's wife opened a drawer in her work-table and drew out a photograph. She smiled—such a sad smile—through tears that trickled down her cheeks as she looked at it; it was such a brilliant, laughing face, so full of longing and—temptation.

"Shadows are the ashes of sunshine," she whispered, and repeated the word sunshine as though caressing it. Then she added softly: "His methods may sometimes seem wrong to me, but the man himself is always right. Billy dear, you are the noblest and the very best of men. I hope that she will not wholly make you forget me—forever."

VI

UNDER the circumstances it seemed only proper to Senator Roberts that he should write once more to Strebor, assuring him that his letter had carried weight in assisting to the final decision, and suggesting that if, at any future time, from his better prospect of the world, a friendly word of coun-

sel occurred to him, the senator would be very glad to consider it.

On the whole, the senator felt a certain satisfaction in the way that he emerged from the humiliating correspondence, leaving Strebor rather on his honor to notify him, at least, before he ever changed the current of his forceful cartoons. After that he breathed easier and closed the letter with the diplomatic suggestion that, as this was wholly outside of the sphere of the press or public service, he hoped the artist would remember that whenever it lay in his power he should be very glad to reciprocate.

Strebor's letter was the unexpected. He said:

There is a favor which I had hoped some chance would afford me the opportunity to ask. I have to decline many orders for portraits, under the truthful assertion that I have not the time to paint them. It sometimes covers, as well, the fact that the proposed face fails to interest me. I had the honor of having the senator's wife pointed out to me in the Senate gallery. It is a face which I should like to paint. The pleasure will fully compensate me for the work. I am to have a temporary studio in Philadelphia the last week in the month. If it is agreeable to the senator and to Mrs. Roberts, I should like to have her sit to me for an hour or two on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth.

The twenty-fourth was the date of the last grand ball at the White House. The man who is living in temptation is not really reasonably responsible for the spontaneous presentiments of his brain. Senator Roberts was himself thoroughly indignant that the first thought which flashed before him suggested that if his wife were in Philadelphia that night—

He was so honestly indignant that, when he handed the letter to his wife at the breakfast table the next morning, without even waiting to explain how he came to be in correspondence with Strebor, he said:

"The date which he sets, the twenty-fourth, is the date of the White House ball. I will write to him to change the time. I merely want to know, before writing, that you are perfectly willing to sit."

"I am perfectly willing to sit, dear," she replied, her eyes resting on the letter while she nervously folded and unfolded a corner of it. Her lips trembled a little, too; she longed so desperately to look into her husband's eyes, to forget the commonplace words of life which she must speak, to look her very heart down into his and pour into his ears those rushing, throbbing, tingling words of fire which had burned in her so long; while better and better, through each gone year, she had realized how plainly he expected something else—or nothing.

"I am perfectly willing to sit, dear," she said. "But much more am I willing to be away from Washington on the twenty-fourth. Even if I could easily afford to dress for that ball it would be silly for me to go. So much will be made of you that night, dear, for the noble way in which you refused to take the nomination from the President. I am always very proud and happy when I feel that you are being appreciated, and I always want to go away somewhere and hide. And if a woman knows beside that she is not properly put together, why, she cannot possibly enjoy society except through the newspapers. Let me take the opportunity to be away, dear. I will visit the Armads. They have so often urged me. I'll stay several days, dear, if you don't mind."

Senator Roberts believed, with his wife, that it would be pleasanter for her, and consented as a matter of course. It was only that first wild thought which troubled him—troubled him till he left his coffee, left his breakfast, bent over his wife's bowed head so quickly, so unexpectedly that she had no time to look up, kissed her neck and hurried from the house.

She could not have looked up, she wouldn't have looked up, at that moment, for her life; for in her eyes was something which her husband had never seen there, and the moment he was gone she ran to her room, locked the door, buried her face in the pillows and sobbed till the very room seemed reeling and trembling. It was

long before the sobs were broken by a choking whisper:

"O Lord, help me to be brave and hold on till he is elected. Then please—oh, please, let me die!"

But the White House ball held nothing for Senator Roberts which that first thought suggested. Whatever might have been was not. The rose was robbed of its fragrance. If his beautiful client realized that something had drawn him, for a moment, a little way off, she was too wise to show it and too much a woman of the world not to know that spasmodic circum-spection is a natural, intermittent relapse, from which a quick and delicious recovery is the common course of things.

The President showed his appreciation of the senator and also of public opinion, by appointing him at the head of a commission of three of the ablest international lawyers in the country, empowered to investigate and adjust the most delicate complication that had ever arisen between the United States and one of the great World Powers. It necessitated his going abroad the moment that Congress adjourned.

For the first time in his life the senator's home relations had been visibly strained ever since his wife returned from Philadelphia. He had little time to worry over it, but he realized it, and when his wife suggested that it would be better for her to spend the summer with friends who were to be in New Hampshire, at the Wentworth, by the sea, he was very glad and in a vague, offhand way assured himself that a few months' separation would put them back again into the harmony of life which was all that home meant to him.

Just before he sailed the senator received a letter from Strebor asking permission to submit the portrait of his wife in a prize contest of American artists. It was a simple picture; the plainest kind of woman, with closely coiled hair, in a plain bodice with a narrow collar. The senator could not see the sense in exhibiting such a thing

in a prize contest; but if Strebor wanted to there was certainly no reason to refuse. He was more surprised, while abroad, to receive another letter, stating that the portrait had taken the first prize and asking permission to have it hung in the National Academy exhibition, which was about to open for the summer.

The senator was less versed in the ways of art than in anything but house-keeping. The fact surprised him, but the request was something he could not very well have refused, even had there appeared some reason.

His last post before returning brought him a delicately scented, sealed and crested letter from his fair client, asking that as soon as possible after his arrival he come to her, at Newport, for at least a week.

The same post brought him a letter from his wife. It was beautifully written. He could have read it across the room; but there were no odors of Eden or monogrammed seals. It simply congratulated him upon the brilliant success of his mission, which had been cabled to America, and which would do so much to restore the dignity which had been jeopardized by previous diplomatic blunders, and closed with the suggestion that there was a duty which he owed to himself to recuperate after such labor, before complying with the merciless demands of a political campaign at home; that he ought to devote at least a month to enjoying the best of Europe before he returned.

That post brought him also a number of home papers, in one of which there was an extended article on the National Academy exhibition. In the headline and opening paragraphs words were overworked in praise of Strebor's masterpiece, "The Head of a Woman." The writer dilated less upon the artist's ability than upon the marvelous beauty of the subject. He stated that at first it was generally conceded to be almost, of necessity, an ideal head, possessing all of the qualities of composite beauty within the scope of a facile master, but that a great many had already recognized it as a liv-

ing, speaking likeness of the beautiful wife of Senator Roberts.

Over the letter from his client the senator smiled and wrote that affairs of State were demanding so much of him that he must not only forego the pleasure of visiting Newport, but must also abandon any further care of the estate.

Over the letter from his wife he sighed and wrote that he was returning at once because he would rather spend with her what time he could devote to recreation.

Over the newspaper he frowned, and after a second reading laid it on the table.

The day he arrived he visited the Academy exhibition, taking the precaution to be alone. He easily found the portrait and for the first time in his life stood dumb before a situation which confronted him.

It was simply what the catalogue called it, "The Head of a Woman"—just that, nothing more; the head—and the shoulders. Her back was turned. She was looking over her shoulder and up, smiling. It was only a perfect profile; only a beautiful head in a cloud of wavy hair; only the curved neck of Cleopatra resting on the shoulders of Diana.

Beautiful? The senator asked himself how under heaven he had always been so blind. He could see it all—more than the critic saw—the most beautiful, the nearest to a perfect face his eyes had ever known, and it was precisely what the paper said: "A living, speaking portrait of his wife."

That thoughtful forehead, that earnest eye, those timidly courageous lips that always parted with a smile for him, that beautiful throat, that glorious hair. How often, oh, how often he had seen it all, before the open fire, through the miserable smoked glass of his wretched abstraction!

And those bare shoulders—that very pose! That same look, backward and upward and smiling! He brushed away the years that had blurred it all, and then, suddenly, he remembered. Ah, yes! he remembered! Oh, it was

so long ago; so many years ago! For so long he had looked upon those shoulders as simply the necessary frame for some sombre, inexpensive stuff with a narrow white collar. For so long he had forgotten all about the time he suddenly remembered; the time when he accidentally came upon his wife, from behind, while she was bathing.

He remembered how the hot blood surged through his veins for one moment of wild, fierce passion, of which, the very next, he was utterly ashamed. He remembered how, in that mad moment, when she stood there, looking back and up, and smiling at him, over her beautiful shoulder—how, in the scorching rush of fire he had caught her in his arms and kissed her neck and fled. The memory burned his cheeks and quivered and tingled in every nerve. And the recollection of all the years gone, murdered, thrown away, between then and now, while they had lived together and he had thought her only a part of the machinery of the house, came back to him now.

Then his face grew dark. He had come back to the present. He had realized that he was looking at a portrait—a portrait painted by Strebor; that his wife had posed, like that, for a stranger to sit, and look, and paint, for hours! And he knew how Strebor must have felt. He knew precisely how Strebor felt. And was he such a miracle of ice that he had sat, and seen, and felt, and simply painted—painted the head of a woman?

He did not blame his wife. He simply cursed himself for throwing what he had forgotten to value in the very face of a stranger—a stranger who knew enough to recognize the reality, even in the shadows of the Senate gallery and under the cheap, plain stuff and narrow white collar; and who told him that the pleasure of painting it would compensate him for the work. And the pleasure of painting it—was that all?

The determination seized him to find that fellow Strebor, and know

what manner of man he was; judge for himself if he was such a prodigy of art that he could sit, and see, and feel, and only *paint*—"The Head of a Woman."

He was a man of action when his course was laid. He took a carriage, forthwith, to the office of the *Search-Light*; but they were not very sure about Strebor. They said that he was spending the summer somewhere in New Hampshire; that his mail was always forwarded to the post-office, general delivery, at Portsmouth.

Senator Roberts drove back to his hotel and locked the door of his room, that he might not be disturbed while he read again his last letter from his wife, urging him not to hurry home, but to spend at least a month recuperating in Europe. He remembered the cloud that had hung persistently between them, after her return from Philadelphia, and that Portsmouth and the Wentworth were side by side. And Strebor—Strebor who had seen, who knew—Strebor was spending the summer there. His wife had asked him to go there, instead of going abroad with him. His wife had asked him to remain a month longer in Europe, instead of coming back to her. Then he thought of the reply he sent and hurried off a wire to tell her that complications had arisen which would prevent his coming to New Hampshire, but that he should be so little in Washington that she had better remain where she was for the present. He didn't blame Strebor. He didn't blame his wife. He blamed only himself, and he suffered—because he really loved his wife.

Sitting alone, in utter misery, he thought of the other letter and his reply and—not at least with any theory of revenge, retaliation or justifiable indulgence—simply because he was miserable for the first time, and did not understand, but longed to be anywhere, he sent a wire after that letter, too, saying that his plans were so changed that he could visit Newport in a few days.

The visit was not a success, how-

ever—not as he saw it, then. It was a series of disappointments, a sequence of awakenings. He left for Washington, wondering that he could ever have thought that woman in any way comparable with his wife.

In Washington, at least, he found himself easily alone. He never knew before what an utterly deserted place Washington could be. But he found a letter awaiting him from his wife, saying that she would rather return to Washington, keeping the house open and ready for him, whenever he was near, in case he really could not come to New Hampshire.

It suddenly dawned upon him that he was glad. He wired her to come at once. He was very glad. He realized that it was kind of her to be willing to come at all. He resolved that if she could forget all the years of the past he would forget one short summer. He realized that it devolved upon him, not upon her, to make amends, and he proposed to make them, but—man proposes. It is his poor prerogative.

VII

For the first time in his life Senator Roberts devoted himself to domestic problems. He secured servants, had the house unrolled from summer shrouds, an elaborate dinner prepared to await his wife's arrival and the rooms all filled with flowers. Every effort to prove to his wife that he had turned over a new leaf made him happier, more hopeful, more impatient for her to come. He reached the station half an hour before the train and wondered why he had not thought to go as far as Baltimore to meet her.

His excitement lasted to the very moment when she was stepping from the car, in her plain traveling dress, narrow white collar and tightly twisted hair. Then suddenly he thought of Strebor, and recoiled.

It was pitiful. Of course his wife noticed it. He made a valiant struggle, but his tongue seemed paralyzed.

Even his hands and feet moved stiffly and awkwardly. He forgot to help his wife into the carriage, forgot everything he would have been glad to remember and remembered everything he had intended to forget. It was a wretched ride. It seemed as though they would never reach the Circle. He knew that his face was grave and rigid as the Monument, but his lips were frozen. His eyes would not even imitate the contortions of courtesy.

The senator's wife made a heroic effort to convince herself that the flowers, the dinner, the servants meant that her husband was glad to have her back, but the weight of evidence was too strong to the contrary. By the time dinner was over she knew that barely strength remained to hold the flood in the fountains till she could reach her room, and she was trying to think how she could quickest escape, when her husband said:

"The coolest place this evening will be by the windows in the library. We'll sit there, if you don't mind."

Mechanically she took from the side table a paper which she had carried in her hand all the way from New York. The senator sat on one side of the curve and without a word she sank into a chair that seemed almost suggestively waiting, as far away as possible, on the other side.

It was a sultry summer night. The electric lights outside shimmered through the foliage, dappling with quivering sparks of dancing fire the ceiling and the walls. There were no lights within.

The senator lighted a cigar. He felt himself untwisting a little, and hoped that it would help him if he could only think of anything to say.

How could he know that his wife was as thankful for silence as he had sometimes been? He could not penetrate the shadows and see the tears that were silently falling. Suddenly she realized that she still held the paper in her hand. It was something pleasant which she had brought for him.

"The *Search-Light* was just out," she said, so softly that he did not catch the

undertone of tears. "I bought a copy in New York. It is not worth lighting up to see just now, but I can tell you about it. The full-page is called 'Welcome Home.' The mastiff is sitting up, in the centre, looking straight at one. Bleecker is the poodle, sitting on one side, and Norman, just like him, sitting on the other. Bleecker has his plume, 'I am a Democrat,' and Norman has a tag, with the quotation from his speech, 'I have always lived and hope to die a stanch Republican.' On the collar of the mastiff are the words, 'I am an American.' Some gentlemen in the car were talking about it and said that Strebor had outdone himself."

The senator cringed and crunched his cigar. Hope flew out of the window. He was in a worse state than ever. For the first time in his life he was angry with his wife. She might at least have had the courtesy to leave Strebor out of their first evening, or else have remained with him when he gave her the chance. It seemed to him an insult. He did not hear what she was saying. He only felt, with added fury, the determination to know something of the man who had gathered up his cast-off wife. He even forgot that he was speaking to that wife. Thinking of her only as one who knew the man and could enlighten him, he said roughly:

"What kind of an ass is that fellow Strebor, anyway?"

It was so sudden that for a moment his wife was dumb. Twice she began before she finished the simple reply: "Is he an ass, dear? Why do you ask?"

"Only random curiosity," the senator muttered, crushing his cigar.

A sentiment which she had never felt toward her husband before, unpleasant but timely, seemed to lift her out of herself, and she said quietly:

"Why do you ask *me*, dear?"

It was going from bad to worse. It struck the senator as subterfuge, from the woman in whom he had always placed unlimited confidence. It was too much for one already wrought and he replied:

"I supposed that having spent the summer with him you might be able to judge."

"Why do you make that statement, dear?" his wife asked instantly.

"They told me at the office of the *Search-Light* that he was spending the summer near Portsmouth," the senator muttered.

"Did you want to see him for anything in particular?" his wife asked, so quickly that, without considering, the senator replied:

"After seeing the portrait he painted I thought——"

"You saw the portrait? Did you like it, dear?"

The change was so sudden that for an instant the senator almost forgot.

"I am not a connoisseur, I——"

"Didn't you like it, dear?" The voice shook with tears, but the mastiff was deaf and blind. His teeth were set. He muttered:

"I didn't precisely admire the costume in which my wife sat for it."

The silence of the summer night absorbed them. The work was done—all done, and when the brute in man is satisfied the man in brute begins to look for sackcloth and ashes. The senator was working himself into abject contrition. His wife was solving a problem. She emerged first. Her soft voice said: "You went to find Strebor. When they told you that he was spending the summer near Portsmouth, you wired me that you could not come, and then—then—this? Is that it, dear?"

"Yes," muttered the senator.

A breeze rustled the leaves in the Circle, tossing the flashes of light on the ceiling. Something sounding like that old, low laugh followed it and after the laugh, from years and years gone, came that blessed: "Billy dear, it was foolish of me not to tell you when I came back from Philadelphia. But it was such a joke that I saved it for a time which did not come, when you were not too busy to listen. Billy dear, Strebor is a woman."

"A woman!"

"And an everyday kind of a woman, at that."

"Holy smokel!" said the senator. Then something else swept over him. He sprang to his feet. "Maude," he exclaimed, "forgive me. I owe you——"

"If the senator from Maganaw will permit me, he owes me nothing at all," his wife interrupted. "He has paid me the most profound of compliments. He has been jealous, and I did not suppose that he could ever care enough for me for that."

"Maude——"

"Billy dear, that's all settled now, so please sit down again. You have made me very happy. It is worth more than it cost. Now, there is a matter of national importance that I want to talk about."

"Not now, Maude—oh, not now! What is a national matter, compared with this? And not here. It's too stifling hot. I'm weak as a dead rat. I'm dripping with perspiration."

"But it's very important, Billy dear."

"Then let's go up another flight and out on that high balcony. We can get out there and sit, can't we?"

"Not tonight, Billy dear. Why, you've never been up that flight of stairs since we've lived in this house. The front room is all littered up. You could never get through it."

"After what I've just been through, Maude, do you suppose I couldn't go through litter? Come on."

"No, no, Billy; please not tonight. I'll have the room cleared tomorrow, and then you shall sit there as much as you like."

The senator sat down, remarking: "Once so well devastated, Maude, I have not even power of protest left; but fire off your national question quick, and have it over with, for I have something else to say."

"It's about the President's offer to you of the State Portfolio, Billy dear; I——"

"I say, Maude, how the deuce did you——?"

"I didn't, Billy dear. I only took

that way to find out, for fear you'd put me off some way. I knew that the present secretary would have to go. The *Search-Light* has been making it too hot for him. I fancied he might take the solitude of summertime to steal away, and I thought that if he was half wise he would go now, under the reflected glory you have just won for him. Then, of course, there was nothing the President could do but give you the appointment."

"Maude, you are too—too—too something or other. You ought to be editor of a political paper."

She laughed and added: "You haven't replied yet, for you haven't had time."

"Not to put up a show of appreciative deliberation, no. The bill is upon the table, waiting to be voted down."

"That's just what I thought, and why I came pell-mell from New Hampshire. I want it called up, at once, for debate, Billy dear. I have something to say on it."

"Nonsense, Maude!"

"Why?"

"Well, are you anxious—or able—to go into any profounder self-sacrificing economies than those which you have heroically endured for the past twelve years, simply to facilitate my gathering about myself what *éclat* may attach to the office of Secretary of State?"

"If it were only a question of economy, Billy, and even if your personal *éclat* was the only result, I'm sure I should say yes, instantly. But——"

"Well?"

"No, no; I have the floor. I haven't finished yet. In the first place, much as I long for any honor which can come to you, I am thinking, in this, only of the country which needs you. Yes, I would willingly make any sacrifice that was required. But in the second place it can all be accomplished without any sacrifice at all."

"See here, Maude, you have suffered so long and so patiently that you have grown accustomed to it, and I

have not even been man enough to appreciate it. My eyes have been opened at last, and I propose to put a stop to it. I propose to do the economizing myself for awhile, and let you take a rest. Of all things I do not propose to take a step like this on the strength of that resolution."

"Is it simply on the ground of economy?"

"That is one of twenty-five good reasons, and, being all-sufficient, the rest are unnecessary."

"That is, if there were no chance of a necessity to economize, you would accept?"

"Why, Maude, house-rent and diplomatic dinners require every cent of a secretary's salary."

"Still, you might answer my question, Billy dear. I didn't exactly want to say it. It was only—only—I was just wondering if one of the other reasons was that—that—Would you be a little ashamed of me?"

"Maude, if——"

"Please don't, Billy dear. This is just a friendly little chat, you know, on an important subject; and of course you have sometimes, with the best of reason, too, wished that I was a little more like——"

"The more damnable disgrace to me, Maude! Yes, I have thought it, sometimes. I have been just that cursed fool! Some day I shall tell you all about it and see if you can forgive me; some day, after I have proved to you that you'll never have cause again to suspect me of such a thought, I shall——"

"You are away from the question, Billy dear. I asked, in case there was no need of economy, if you would accept?"

"I suppose so, if you advised it, Maude. What are you coming at?"

"I'm coming at a great big mastiff, dear, and I'm a little afraid of him," the senator's wife replied: and for the first time in her life she sat on the arm of her husband's chair and leaned on his broad shoulder. "I'm coming to talk, and you must listen patiently and

not frighten me. Do you remember, years ago, we were out riding? We passed a place where three lots on a corner were to be sold at auction, and you said they would go for a song, but that some day they would be worth a gold mine?"

"Yes, I remember, and the very corner, too. And I was right. I passed the place only yesterday. The handsomest house in Washington is nearly completed on that corner lot, and the lots on either side couldn't be bought for a fortune."

"Of course you were right, Billy dear. You are always right. I had just about a little song laid by, which you did not know of, and I went up there next day and bought the lots——"

"You——?"

"Wait a moment. That isn't fair. I was saving the money to surprise you some time when you needed it. You haven't really needed it till now. But once I got the fever I kept watch for chances and bought some more lots, and a year ago I sold part of them for a small fortune, and that lovely house is all paid for and almost finished, rent free, for the next Secretary of State. Now you'll accept, won't you, Billy dear."

"Maude Roberts!"

"You'll accept, won't you, Billy dear?"

"Dear girl! Don't pin me down that way. I have something that I want to say to you."

"I know how it is. I've felt that way many a time. But this is important business and we must forget other things and discuss it on its merits."

"On its merits, then, I'll tell you what I'll do. It would cost a fortune to furnish that house and another to run it. A secretary's salary would go and you would be grubbing just the same in those plain bodices and narrow white collars. We'll rent that house to some other secretary who can afford it, and we'll see you shine the way you ought to, on the receipts."

"Oh, dear! I wish that you were not quite so scrutinizingly observant.

I never thought you cared. But about the house—why, there are Government bonds waiting for you in the safety vault, enough to furnish that house over and over and over, and then beg for more worlds to conquer. Now you'll accept, won't you?"

Senator Roberts's arm had found its way about a trembling waist, and he was drawing his wife closer and closer as he said solemnly:

"I've spent the most of my life, Maude, in blindly accepting situations. But really, if you don't mind, I'd like a little more light on this one."

"Then strike a match, Billy dear. One match will give you quite sufficient light. I'll have everything ready right here."

The senator lighted a match with grave deliberation, and, as the flame shone clear, a trembling finger pointed to a line under the business heading of the *Search-Light*. He read aloud, "M. Strebor, Editor."

"Spell the name backward, Billy dear," the soft voice said.

He spelled it backward and—the match went out.

VIII

LONG later—a lifetime of supernal bliss later—one little arm unwound from about the senator's neck, and lips close to his own whispered:

"Billy dear?"

"Maude darling?"

"I only thought perhaps you were asleep, Billy. I wanted to remind you that you couldn't speak against it, for you said yourself, a little while ago, that I ought to be editor of a political paper. I was afraid, you know, that someone would crowd me off that cartoon page; and sometimes, when you got to talking about it, you sent cold shivers down my back for fear that the policy of the paper would change. So all these years I've been buying the stock, just as fast as I could get it. It's a better paying investment, Billy dear, than even corner lots in Washington. But wasn't I a nervous wreck col-

lecting it—especially when I had almost enough! And wasn't I relieved, just after you sailed for England, when I managed to secure the controlling share, and the policy of the paper was forever ours!"

"How many are there in the secret with you, Maude?" the senator asked, and the low laugh sounded, before the reply:

"Not one living soul but you. The hardest of it all has been the plots and plans I've had to devise to keep it all dark. And I did want to tell you so, when some friends of Senator Slocum's offered Strebor fifty thousand dollars to turn on you and brace him up. But there's not a mortal on the paper, even, who is not just as sure as you were that Strebor is a man. And the best of it all is that you were jealous of him, dear. No, the editors all think he is too busy with his art to come to them, and the artists think he is too busy with his paper."

"But how did you come to paint that portrait of yourself, darling?" the senator asked; and the strong hand drew her still closer, till she had left the arm of the chair altogether.

"Just in mirrors, dear, upstairs. It's my work-room and studio. That's why I didn't dare to have you see it. Going to Philadelphia was only an ex-

cuse to get away from the White House ball. I——"

"Yes, yes, Maude darling! Don't tell me about that. I know, now. I know so much that I never knew before, and, best of all, I know how all these years I've been a fiendish——"

"Stop, Billy!" And a kiss enforced it. Then he said:

"What I mean about the portrait is how came you to think of the beautiful pose?"

"I'll tell you, truly, Billy dear, but maybe you'll think less of me; for you are a man, you know, and I'm only a woman."

"It was long years ago—nothing that you can remember. It was just after we were married—the only time in my life when I believed, just for one little minute, that you almost really loved me, dear—more than respected me, you know; but oh! so much more to a woman. Once when you saw me like that, you came up and kissed me when you didn't have to, you know, just as though you really loved me. And—and—one day, when I seemed to be losing you more and more, the thought came to me that maybe—maybe——"

"Oh, I've always longed so to have you love me, and have you kiss me times when you didn't have to, you know!"

THE ROSE AND THE STAR

WHY is the rose so gay in its filmy beauty clad,
And why is the star of eve alway, in the cloudless west, so sad?
The rose lives only for a day, and at dark in the dust it lies,
While the star shines still o'er river and hill, a joy to mortal eyes—
Why, I say, is the rose so gay, and the evening star never glad?
The voice of the wind I caught, o'er a shattered rose it blew,
And I know its words, as it wandered by, in the garden old were true.

"The rose is gay, though brief its breath,
Because it ne'er hath looked on death;

But the evening star on high—
Why should it not be sad? Alas,
It hath watched a million summers pass,
Like beautiful visions over a glass,
And—a myriad roses die!"

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.

THE TWO GHOSTS

By Richard Le Gallienne

TWO people who had once loved—or thought they loved—had been dead and buried for three years—that is, to each other. To the rest of the world they seemed vigorously and even gaily above ground, and, at all events, had retained sufficient life in them to get engaged to be married to two other people.

The man, it should be explained, was already engaged when he first met the woman, and had never, during the whole course of his relations with her, the smallest intention of breaking his engagement. But the woman did not know that—and there is, of course, no possible justification for his wicked Don Juan-like attitude, except that, as boys will be boys, men will be men.

Now it chanced that one spring afternoon, when these three years had gone by, the ghosts of these two lovers met in a New York drawing-room, and were both very much disturbed at the sight of each other. Nothing upsets a ghost so much as the apparition of another ghost. Though they were both clever ghosts, they were unable to conceal from each other their excitement at meeting, and, indeed, less able to conceal it from the eyes of the lookers-on, who, knowing something of their story when they had been alive, were hardly less excited than themselves.

"The two ghosts have met," went a whisper round the room. "What is going to happen?"

Meanwhile the two ghosts were looking at each other, without saying a word.

Presently, "Is it you?" "Is it

you?" they said together; and each answered, "It is I."

"Let us draw away from the others and look at each other," said the two ghosts, and they found a corner apart from the inquisitive eyes, and looked and looked at each other, and never said a word; till at last the time came when the woman-ghost must go and meet the man to whom she was engaged up there in the real world, and with whom she dined every evening—as, it is well known, is the custom of all engaged couples!

"This cannot be our last meeting," said the two ghosts. "There is so much to say."

"I will meet you in the same dear spot at three tomorrow," said the woman-ghost, and thereupon she vanished; and the man-ghost smiled.

The same dear spot was a certain café full of quiet corners, where in the days when they were alive the two ghosts had been wont to drink through straws to the eternity of their love for each other.

Remembering each other's habits, both ghosts were late, the man half an hour, the woman forty minutes.

"What shall we drink?" said the man-ghost.

"You know," answered the woman-ghost.

The waiter, who was an old friend, was quite startled to see them.

"Why, I thought you were dead!" he exclaimed.

"We have been," said the woman-ghost, looking fondly at the man-ghost and surreptitiously pressing his hand.

The waiter didn't, of course, understand, so, to relieve his embarrassment—with that extraordinary memory for the tastes of their customers which good waiters possess—"Shall I bring you the same as in the old days?" he asked, with a fatherly smile on their re-arisen happiness.

"Do you really remember?" asked the woman-ghost.

"You shall see, miss," answered the waiter, and presently returned with the sacramental drink he had made for them so often three years ago.

"Fancy you remembering—how dear of you, John!" said the woman-ghost. "Why, I believe he is quite happy to see us again," she added, when he had left them alone.

"The whole world is happy with us," said the man-ghost; "the very cars outside seem to be singing a happy song. And they have sounded so lonely for ever so long—such a sad, lost moaning they made. Do you remember our old spring song?"

"Oh, the gay, gay people
Out in the sun, in the sun,
For today the winter is ended,
Today the spring is begun."

"And the open cars are running,
And the brooks are running, too,
And there's a bird, dear, singing,
Singing all of you."

"I love you," said the woman-ghost, laying her hand on his.

"How dear of you to say it first again—as you did long ago," laughed the man-ghost, perhaps a little ambiguously.

Then they took up their straws.

"Who are we to drink to?" asked the man-ghost.

"Us!" answered the woman-ghost.

"Us!" said the man-ghost.

And then with their eyes upon each other they drank through the straws.

They had a very great deal to say to each other, many things out of the past to explain, many old misunderstandings to discuss. They had, despite their great love, lied no little to each other in the old days—the man, perforce, because, as I have said, he loved another

woman, too, and loved her most; the woman for no particular reason except that she was *intrigante* by nature, and couldn't help it. Both had found the other out, the man the woman's little mean lies, the woman the man's great big lies. And so they had become ghosts to each other. Yet they had both cared a great deal, both had suffered, and both were happy to forget each other's faults for the purpose of spending a few hours together in a fool's paradise.

"Ah! but I have changed so much since then!" said the woman-ghost.

"The little lies have fallen from me. I see now how right you were about me. If only I had known then—but I was little more than a child. . . ."

"Yes!" said the man-ghost wickedly in his own heart. "It is true—you were but twenty-eight. . . ."

This was, no doubt, a little mean of the man-ghost—but then, if only the reader could know all, he would understand.

"You have changed, too," said the woman-ghost presently. "Your mouth is kinder. You, too, I can see, have grown truer, more sincere. . . ."

The man-ghost did his best to look like a reformed character, and pressed her hand impressively. He said nothing, but his whole attitude was designed to convey that, indeed, life had at last purged the dross out of him and taught him the long lesson of the One Woman. As a matter of fact it had, but it was by means of another woman that he had learned it, the woman whom he had always loved—but deceived awhile. He was not deceiving her now, for he had told her of his having met the ghost and the likelihood of his meeting her again. She was so secure in his love that she smiled at his vagaries and left him to go his way. Wise women are not wastefully jealous. They keep their jealousy for really important occasions.

Both ghosts were very delicate to avoid mention of the *status quo*, though by every indirect method of which their subtle brains were capable they sought to read each other's minds

on the subject—with but little result. The woman-ghost, however, was intuitively aware of a certain stubborn loyalty to the other woman in the man-ghost's carefully chosen words and nimble evasions.

Thus, in retrospective readjustments, stealthy reconnaissances of each other, and withal real joy in each other's recovered presence, the afternoon went by, and presently once more the time approached for the woman-ghost to dine in the real world.

"We cannot part like this," said the two ghosts; "there is so much still to say."

So it was agreed that they should meet again on the morrow, at the same place, at the same hour.

"You had better not come out with me," said the woman-ghost at parting, for ghosts have a great objection to being seen together; so the man-ghost remained behind, and watched her figure through the window, and wondered if he could ever really love her again as he used to do.

Next day the two ghosts were comparatively punctual at the rendezvous. The woman-ghost was twenty minutes late and the man-ghost twenty-five. Again they drank to "Us" through the sacramental straws, again their friend the waiter beamed upon their resurrection, again they talked of the past and tried in vain to wrest from each other the secret of the present, and again they were very happy, and again when the time came round for the engaged couple to dine together nothing seemed to have been said.

So once more it was "Tomorrow—at three"; and the man-ghost watched the woman-ghost through the window, and wondered. But he admired her frock.

Thus many days went by, and the two ghosts continued meeting each other according to their notions of three o'clock; and so much a custom had their meetings become that they had almost forgotten that they were ghosts at all; and certainly anyone seeing them together, seeing their close colloquies and the way their eyes hung

upon each other, would have had considerable difficulty in distinguishing them from real lovers. Each day the living blood seemed to be pouring into their shrunken veins, each day they grew less and less like phantoms.

There is no real ghost, I need hardly say, that does not own and haunt some buried treasure. Now both these ghosts possessed their buried treasure—treasure which three years ago they had professed to destroy. One day they had dared to ask each other concerning it.

"You did not really burn them?" said the man-ghost.

"No, I could not bear to, and never meant to; did you?"

And the man-ghost said the same as the woman-ghost. And both told the truth. For, in their way, they had loved each other.

"Oh, come and see my buried treasure!" said the woman-ghost, as the time came for parting.

"But . . ." the eyes of the man-ghost queried, "what of the dinner hour in the real world?"

As it chanced the woman-ghost was free this night; and as, day by day, the woman-ghost had been growing more and more daring, they drove in a cab together, the two ghosts, to the place of the buried treasure—trusting perhaps also to the alleged invisibility of ghosts.

To drive in a cab again together was for them a separate bliss—poor, disembodied spirits; and then at length they found themselves at the entrance of the apartment house at which in his carnal life the man-ghost had been so accustomed a presence. It was but natural that he should re-enter these once familiar doors with a thrill of memory. How strange it was to be there again, to find everything the same, the same clerks at the desk, as she went there to inquire for her mail. . . . Yes! it was strange, and almost creepy, even for a ghost. When they came to the elevator there was the same good boy David running it who had been so kind—in exchange for dollar bills—in the old times. The

good David almost fainted at the sight of the man-ghost.

"Why! I thought, sir . . ." he began, and stopped in time.

When they were out of the elevator the woman-ghost explained that David having so often inquired after the gentleman that came no more, she had calmly told him that the gentleman was dead. Hence David's natural surprise.

"It was true, wasn't it?" she added.

"Ye-es," answered the man-ghost, with an inward reflection on that old habit of unveracity.

Then they entered the rooms he had once loved so well—entered them by the same door!—the rooms that had once seemed like the shrine of some pure spirit, the dwelling-place of a fairy-woman. The same rooms, the same furniture; a few more books, a few more photographs, the desk three years untidier—that was the only difference.

When they had closed the door they stood a moment side by side looking at the place where they had both seemed so magically alive. Then they fell into each other's arms and kissed each other, and kissed each other again and again, and, although they were ghosts and engaged ghosts, too, the kisses seemed wonderfully real, and anyone who could have seen them might well have wished to be a ghost—so happy they seemed revisiting thus the glimpses of the moon in each other's company.

Neither of them could believe that they were there—together; yet in a moment the three years seemed to have vanished for both of them—though deep in their hearts they knew they were only ghosts. Still, the sensation was very sweet of seeming to be really alive again together, and who shall blame them if they gave themselves up to it?

After awhile the woman-ghost said: "Come, let us look at our buried treasure," and she turned to a little urn-shaped box of seventeenth century workmanship, made of wood covered with decorative shapes of beaten cop-

per, and a fantastic lock of iron big enough to belong to the gate of a castle.

"I have two keys to this," she said; "here is one of them. Take it and open the box for us, and then keep the key forever. Here is my own key. No one so long as I live shall look inside this box but you and I. It belongs to us. It is our year. No future has any right over it. . . ."

Then they placed the box between them on a divan, and the man-ghost set the key to the lock and raised the lid, and the two looked in as into a grave—a grave filled with rose leaves; and, as the man-ghost looked, the tears came into his eyes, and he took the woman-ghost's face in his hands and kissed her very gently, and then they fell into each other's arms over the little grave and cried bitterly.

And anyone looking on would have said that this was the real sorrow of real people. But neither forgot in their hearts that they were ghosts.

When they had recovered themselves, and were drying their eyes and trying to laugh away their foolishness, the man-ghost said:

"You make me believe that you did really love me, after all. . . ."

"I loved you all the time," she answered. "It was you that failed."

Then she took up a folded paper from one of the little trays. It made a withered sound when she opened it.

"Do you remember the goldenrod along the road—that morning? Here is a piece of it."

And again she took a folded paper and opened it.

"Do you remember," she said, "that old desk you used to write on? Once, when you were not looking, I took a penknife and cut away a splinter of it. Here it is."

Can you wonder that the man-ghost felt his heart fill with tears?

"Did you really love me so much as that?" he said. "How grateful you make me—how happy!"

And then, one by one, the woman-ghost showed him the hoarded treasures of her heart. It was all too sacred to tell about; but there was nothing

that bore the stamp of a moment's memory, however slight, that the woman had not saved, trifles inconceivably trivial, as well as little intimate memorials heartbreakingly intimate. The man-ghost almost forgot the personal relation of it all to himself in his reverence at this revelation of a woman's heart.

"To think," he kept saying over and over, "to think that you loved me like that—and I never knew! How can I ever be grateful enough for this wonderful love that you gave me?"

So, for a long while the two ghosts hung over their buried treasure, and at length placed each little memory back in its place, locked the urn-shaped box, and with a sigh the man-ghost placed his key in his pocket, and the woman-ghost slipped hers into her bosom—and by this the clocks were striking eleven.

"I must go," said the man-ghost, rising, but he lingered still a moment while the woman-ghost held him in her arms and kissed him passionately. When they came out of their kiss, breathless and laughing, the woman-ghost said:

"I am afraid this hardly looks as though we were ghosts."

Yet for all that both knew that they were ghosts.

As the man-ghost walked home, with a curious gravity in his heart, he suddenly thought of one incident of the evening, the significance of which had not struck him at the time. While they were looking over those memories in the little chest, the woman-ghost had held up a piece of paper on which were written some verses.

"Do you remember this?" she asked.

He remembered well. "But where," he added, "is the letter that came with it? You seem to have torn it off," and he pointed to the top of the paper which had evidently been cut with a pair of scissors.

"Oh, that is down there among the other letters," she answered. "I wanted to have the poem by itself."

It was a slight incident, and at the moment he had given it no thought; but, as he walked home, his memory went back to it and suddenly recalled

what the letter had been which accompanied the verses. It had been a very tender letter, memorial of an occasion very sacred to both of them; but it had been for that very reason the kind of letter one would not care to see in an auction-room or an autograph dealer's catalogue. Therefore the woman-ghost had—destroyed it. Perhaps not unnaturally, but why had she not said so? Why had she said it was there with the other letters?

And so once more that shadow of unveracity stole over the man-ghost's thoughts and vitiated the sincerity of that afternoon.

For all these meetings the two ghosts still felt that they had more to say to each other, so still they continued meeting, and still each evening the woman-ghost returned to dinner in the real world. And so the beautiful days went by.

One day as they sat together in their café the woman-ghost said:

"Do you remember what day Monday will be?"

"The eighteenth of April," answered the man-ghost promptly. So much indeed the waiter could have told him, but as men-ghosts have exceedingly bad memories for anniversaries, he immediately set to work trying to recall the significance of the eighteenth of April.

"Yes! but you remember what it means—what it once meant?"

"Do you really think that I could possibly forget?" answered the man-ghost, with a certain reverential reticence of manner, as though, while the occasion was perfectly clear in his mind, it was one almost too sacred to recall in words. By such dumb show of feeling he succeeded in convincing the woman-ghost that the date was indeed green in his memory; the more so as she herself had her own reasons for not putting the date into words.

"Do you think we might spend the day in the country, as we did three years ago?" said the woman-ghost. "It would be doing no wrong to—anybody, would it?"

"Of course it wouldn't. Ghosts can-

not harm the living," said the man-ghost; "the worst they can do is to haunt them. Let us go."

"The spring is early this year," said the woman-ghost; "one feels it breathing already in the town. Even here the buds are thickening on the trees; but the country must already be leaf and blossom and birds."

"Let us go and teach the birds to sing," said the man-ghost.

"We might even teach them to fly," said the woman-ghost, laughing over the two straws daintily held in her lips, like pipes of some frail forgotten music.

"Oh, winter of my heart—when comes the spring . . ."

the man-ghost began to recite in a low voice, half to himself—

"I am sore weary of these death-like days,
This shroud unheaving of eternal snow—
Oh, winter of my heart—when comes the spring!"

"Who did you write that to?" asked the woman-ghost jealously. "It was not to me. . . ."

"No, it was not to you, dear ghost," smiled the man-ghost; "it was to a living woman."

"Don't think of the living today," said the woman-ghost. "It is ungallant, at the very least."

"You are right," answered the other; "it was but a passing thought, and it is past. Now, dear ghost, I am your own ghost again. . . ."

"I wonder if you really love me?" asked the woman-ghost.

"As much as one ghost can love another ghost," the man-ghost answered.

And then, looking at the clock, they saw that it was already the hour of the betrothed.

"Before you go, tell me in return if you really love me?" asked the man-ghost.

"As much as a living woman can love a ghost," she answered half sadly, half laughingly, and her skirts rustled away to leave the man-ghost pondering on the enigmatic reply. Suppose he should cease to be a ghost! Suppose she were really a living woman!

He watched her through the café

window as she caught the car. One thing was certain—her new spring hat was quite pretty.

On the morning of the eighteenth of April the two ghosts met very early at their café, and, after first drinking through the straws very solemnly to the anniversary they were about to celebrate—which, shame upon him! the man-ghost had in vain tried to place—they discussed their plans for the day.

"Shall we go—there?" said the woman-ghost.

The word "there" only deepened the mystery for the man-ghost, but he was able to say an appropriate thing.

"Do you think we dare?" he asked. "It is always such a terrible risk revisiting places where one has been so happy."

"Do you think we shall run any risk today?" asked the woman, looking at once fondly and searchingly into his face.

For answer the man-ghost looked at her a long, long look, and presently asked the waiter to order a hansom to take them to the Grand Central. He could remember the Grand Central—but what on earth was the name of the other station! For, you see, they had been so often into the country together, so often that New York State made a kind of Palestine, sown thick for them with holy places. But which was the holy place connected with April the eighteenth? All the way in the cab the man-ghost was cudgeling his brains for the name of the place, but at length they arrived at the depot without his having been able to recall it. As he handed the woman-ghost out of the hansom a desperate expedient occurred to him.

"I have just remembered a telegram I must send," he said; "do you mind getting the tickets while I send it?" and he pressed some money into her hand.

She went off gaily, poor little woman-ghost, and the man-ghost felt the awful wretch that he was—but is it the fault of man that he was not born with a woman's memory for anniversaries?

Presently they met again. She

handed him the tickets, and how eagerly he read them! Now, at all events, he knew the name of the station, but as they had been there together at least six times he was still at a loss as to which visit they were about to celebrate. However, that was a mere detail, now that he knew the name of the place; and so they started off, happy as birds—for perhaps the deepest bond between them had always been their mutual love for what is usually called "nature," a love peculiarly their own. They both knew others who loved "nature," but no one quite as they loved it. The purest hours of companionship they had ever known had been out together in the fields and woods; and to be once more in the country together with the perilous intoxication of spring all around them, the vivid fountains of green leaves, piercingly fresh, the balm in the air, and oh, the birds!—was a happiness that made them forget awhile that they were only ghosts. So might two lost spirits escaped awhile from Hades into the upper air scent the sweet earth-smell of the mold, fill their arms with fragrant boughs and passionately feed their eyes on the good sky.

"It is good to be here," said the man-ghost; "let us build two tabernacles!"

"Two!" laughed the woman-ghost.

And, as by this time they were in the ungossiping wilderness, they took hands and ran together over the rocky meadows, for sheer joy in being there together under the sky.

At last they found the very meadow, the very rocks, overshadowed by the very trees, where they had been so happy that eighteenth of April. A stream had been running close by three years before. It was running still. All was just the same. And here they were once more, to complete the punctuality of nature. Only one object was missing from the landscape—a poor old consumptive horse that had neighed mournfully—and sometimes startlingly—far down the meadow on the eighteenth of April, three years ago.

It was the woman-ghost recalling this old horse that suddenly brought back to the man-ghost's mind the whole set of circumstances which beforehand he had been in vain trying to piece together. At last the anniversary was clear to him, and he could enter into its memorial rites without the sense of hypocrisy or the fear of some disastrous blunder.

And, even with a defective memory for sentiment, it surely had been strange if the man-ghost had not responded to the vernal call of resurrection which breathed and piped and fluted and rippled all about them. The whole sunlit world was rising from the dead—might not these two dead ones arise also, and once again be happy together in the sun? All too soon they must die the second death, from which there is no resurrection. Surely this day in the sun might be theirs, the last day they would ever spend in the spring sunshine together. Was it so very much to ask—so very much to steal?

The two ghosts sat side by side on a ledge of rock high up over the world. A great tree overshadowed them, and it was very cozy. Looking down they could see all the colored spring: farmhouses smothered in blossom, plowed fields already vivid with the ascending blade, nooks and corners of meadow embroidered with flowers.

"It looks almost as if it might be the spring," said the man sadly, "the last spring."

"The last?" queried the woman-ghost.

"I mean together," answered the man, not with entire satisfaction to the woman-ghost.

Actually the man-ghost had made beautiful arrangements for all the springs that remained for him. He intended to spend them with the One Woman. But the occasion demanded a certain picturesque pessimism, and he lived up to the occasion.

"I think," presently said the woman-ghost, who loved nothing so much as a literary allusion; "that Persephone

must have felt as I do now when she arose each year from the shades. How sweet to breathe again the smell of green leaves and the newly turned mold! How sweet to breathe it with you!"

"Properly speaking," the man-ghost answered slyly, "you oughtn't to be breathing it with me; I mean, of course, in your character of Persephone. You should be breathing it with your mother, Ceres."

"I love you even more than my mother," said the woman-ghost, smiling.

"Your learned allusion," said the man-ghost presently, "reminds me of something I forgot to say the other day when we opened that treasure-chest together. It was obvious enough, of course, and hardly worth mentioning. Indeed, I'm sure you thought of it yourself—thought, I mean, of the famous box of Pandora."

"Of course I did; but shall I tell you what I chiefly thought of?"

"Do."

"That, after all the superficial trouble occasioned by the opening of the box, after all the various plagues and vexations and dilemmas had made their escape, there was still Hope lying at the bottom of the box."

In reply the man-ghost pressed the woman-ghost's hand and looked a long look into her face, which was his way of saying everything, yet saying nothing; and the woman-ghost, who it must have been gathered was no fool, was far from being deceived by this code method of saying nothing. She began to understand.

"I am hungry," she said presently; "suppose we open this Pandora's basket."

They had brought with them a little luncheon-basket packed with dainties, and they laughingly unpacked it together.

"There is, you see, Hope at the bottom of the box," said the man-ghost, lifting out a silver flask of considerable dimensions, which the

woman-ghost had given him as a birthday present three years before. "See how faithful I am to you! Wherever I go this goes with me."

"Faithful creature indeed!" laughed the woman-ghost. "I am so glad I chose something useful."

They had no straws with them, so perforce they drank out of that flask together, as indeed they had drunk three years before. Then they turned to the various dainties, and ate heartily and laughed together, and grew happier and happier each hour.

After they had been sitting together in silence for a long time the woman-ghost said:

"Do you remember the day of the marguerites?"

That day the man-ghost did in very truth remember.

"Do you remember the day of the tower?"

That also he remembered.

"Do you remember the poem you wrote me about those two days?"

"I remember that I wrote a poem, but I cannot remember the poem."

"I can," said the woman-ghost, leaning against his shoulder. "Would you like me to say it to you?"

And then the woman-ghost recited as follows:

"Of all the days we said that day was good,
When, 'neath the blue publicity of heaven,
Amid the flickering marguerites we stood,
And gave—or thought we gave—what
once is given
And only once is taken quite away.
But, child, since then how rich the months
that passed
With child-glad hours and many a perfect
day,
Nor maybe yet the happiest or the last.

"Yet, love, I wonder if the day we went
Up that high tower, and stood up in the
sky,
Yet unto earth returned again, was meant
To symbolize our love; nay, even I,
In a dim-lighted, unbelieving hour,
Have wondered if we really climbed the
tower!

"You were right," she added, "we never climbed the tower." And after a pause she whispered, "Is it yet too late?"

The man-ghost shook his head sadly. "Who knows?" he said.

"What are we to do?" said the woman-ghost, holding him more tightly in her arms.

"Time will show us what to do," answered the man-ghost evasively.

"I believe in that no longer," she answered; "it is for us to tell Time what to do."

"It will all come right," said the man-ghost cheerfully.

"I have ceased to believe in things coming right," said the woman-ghost, "unless we make them come right."

At that moment the man-ghost, noticing that the sky was becoming overshadowed with the approaching night, involuntarily took out his watch. It was later than he thought.

"My dear," he said thoughtlessly, "I am sorry, but we must go at once or we shall miss your train."

"I care nothing about trains, I care for nothing," the woman-ghost answered. "I love you only. I would rather miss my train than catch it. . . ."

For answer the man-ghost took the silver flask by the bottom and held it with the neck downward. It was empty.

"Dear little ghost," he said, "I understand. It has been a wonderful spring day. The spring has turned our

heads—but it mustn't turn our hearts. You must catch your train."

In explanation of the conclusion I must add that a ghost, however much it may love another ghost, is anxious above all things to be alive again, alive particularly in the social world. This it can only become by attaching itself to some living person who will give it a simple, undivided love. Now both these ghosts with which this story has dealt alike felt the need of such revivification. The man-ghost, as I have said, had never really been a ghost, for all the time another living woman had been feeding him with her heart's blood. That was why the woman-ghost, when she first met him again, took him for a living man—and hoped to live again through him. And a living man indeed he was for everyone else but her. For her only he was still a ghost.

Therefore, when she came to think over it, she was thankful that he had made her catch her train and so arrive on time for dinner with her betrothed.

As for the man-ghost he went back to the living woman; and she looked up at him and laughed.

"Well, how about the great anniversary?" she said.

"We are finished," he said, laughing. "We have died the second death. The ghosts have laid each other!"



PAYMENT

FOR hope we pay our wits, for joy our souls,
For peace earth's treasure trove;
But all the goods of life seem trivial tolls
For one small hour of love.

ANNA ALICE CHAPIN.



UNDOUBTEDLY

MEDIUM—I see four husbands ahead of you.
ACTRESS—You must be looking backward.

THE MUSIC-ROOM

THROUGH the vast purple curtains' fold and fall
 No sunbeam ever pierces to the room
 Where giant bronzes brood like dreams of doom
 In the deep glow from crimson tapers tall.

Most delicate and most fantastical,
 The ministers of music touch the gloom
 With gleam of wood, and ivory's paler bloom,
 And the dim organ looms above them all.

Silent—but palpitating still with tone,
 And fiery-freighted harmonies that roll
 Through dusk of strange delights and sombre sins;
 Occult confessional, that hears alone,
 The moaning of the organ's troubled soul,
 The wailing of the haunted violins.

FRANK LILLIE POLLOCK.



CONVENIENT

FIRST FRIEND—Did you have anything to eat while you were in your auto?
 SECOND FRIEND—Oh, yes. They had a good restaurant just off the repair-shop.



VERY LIKELY

SHE—The half is never told.
 HE—No, but the fraction that does become public property is always magnified adequately to make up for the whole.



CANDID

MOLLIE—I wouldn't marry the best man in the world.
 KITTIE—I think myself you'd be happier with the other sort.

THE CHAMPION GOES HOME

By Harold R. Durant

THE little boy was awfully lonely. His mother had held him in her arms a long, long time. Even now he could almost feel her trembling fingers in his black curls, and her last words still sounded in his ears—and that was hours ago.

"Mother is all tired out, sonny," she whispered, "and she's going where she won't have to work so hard. She doesn't want to leave her little boy, but she can't help it. You'll be a good boy, won't you, Tommy? Grow up to be a fine, strong man, and—oh, sonny! be more of a man than your father."

The women in the huge tenement block had soothed him as best they could when the men had carried his mother away in the big, black wagon, but now as he sat on the curbstone he began to miss her. Rosalsky had taken the furniture for rent, and another family had moved into the two rooms. He had no home. His only asset was a gold locket which contained his mother's picture. He took it from his pocket and opened it. She must have been an awfully pretty lady then. He dug a grimy fist into one eye to keep back the tears, and scowled at Paddy Sullivan, who sat astride a fire hydrant across the street watching Tommy with evident envy. Paddy had never had a death in his family, and he felt slighted. Tommy pushed his bare feet along the gutter and the mud oozed between his toes with a warm, comfortable feeling. He stole a glance at the boy on the iron perch. Paddy's constant admiration was having its effect. There weren't many eight-year-old boys in the ward as important as he, and—"Hully gee!" he had just thought of the big silver dol-

lar in his pocket which the kind-hearted Mrs. Maher had given him. Why, he was rich! He gave his head a backward jerk and the alert Paddy crossed over in ready response.

"Where'd yer pinch de buck?" asked Paddy in wide-eyed wonderment as he saw the money.

"Oh, no matter," replied Tommy loftily; "it's mine."

"Let's get some papes," cried Paddy, with an eye to business. "We kin make a wad of dough on wuxtras."

Tommy shook his head negatively. His inscrutable face relaxed sufficiently to allow his lips to pucker after the manner of a wise capitalist, and then the healthy animal asserted itself.

"T'ell with that," he said unblushingly; "a plate of 'beef an' 'll do fer mine. Come on!"

Tommy's mother had never been able to make him eschew profanity, but she had eliminated the "dis" and "dat" from his East Side vocabulary. They gorged themselves with "beef an'," and then wandered along the busy thoroughfare. Paddy stopped before several shop windows where confections and toys were displayed, but his "Oh's" and his "Gee's" were not hints strong enough to make Tommy treat him further. Paddy became suspicious and then disgusted.

"Ain't yer goin' t' blow t' somethin' more?" he finally demanded.

"If you ain't gettin' used right you know what you kin do," replied Tommy, bristling belligerently.

"Ah, ye're a cheap guy, a reg'lar shine," snorted the ungrateful Paddy, and without more ado he turned and left him.

Tommy continued on his way, un-

ruffled and serene. The jingle of the money in his pocket was sweet music to his ears, and his full stomach had reduced him to a state of unalloyed contentment. Why shouldn't he be happy? The warm September sun was everywhere and he needn't go home. Home! And then he realized there was no home for him now—that the one who always called him "sonny" was somewhere in a big, black wagon. He swallowed hard to keep back the tears and spent a nickel for a "hot dog" with the "Guinny" on the corner. The mustard always made one's eyes water and then nobody could say he had been crying—just like a kid.

The brave little chap fought out his hard battle alone, but youth finally triumphed over memory and gradually he became himself again. He made a flying jump on a rear platform of an uptown surface car with the agility of a monkey, and when the conductor made a move toward him he fooled that official by tendering his fare. He rode until he received his first glimpse of the country; in fact, he rode so far that it was quite dark when he returned to more familiar scenes. He didn't think of the big, black wagon so often now. He could tell it was late by the number of "jags" who lurched by him. They never got drunk early. He was tired and wondered where he could sleep. He knew he could get a bed for ten cents, but then if he sought the lodging-houses the Society agent would take him and keep him locked up until he was a man. Once when he had torn his trousers in a fight with Dinny Cosgrove, and had been afraid to go home, he had slept all night on the shed back of Cassidy's barn. The very place! He sneaked along the alley, climbed on top of the big canvas-covered furniture van, and from thence to the shed was an easy matter.

He was bounced up and down rudely several times before he realized that the big iron window-shutter on the barn above the shed was open and that men were jumping out of the

window to the shed with flying leaps, then dropping to the yard and disappearing silently in the darkness. The human exodus ceased, and a man appeared at the window and stood looking out. From behind him streamed a bright light, and in its glare Tommy could see that his hair was red, much redder than "Carrot" Coogan's.

"I'd like to lay me hands on de sucker what made dat phony squeal!" muttered the man. "Nothin' doin', Mike," he called out. "Not a cop around. Why, what th'—?"

He had espied Tommy below him all huddled in a frightened heap. "Watcher doin' here, kid?" he asked not unkindly. "Let's look at yer."

Tommy rose obediently. "I wasn't doin' nothin', mister," said the boy. "The bunch come 'hop-scothcin' out the winder where I was sleepin'."

"Why didn't yer go home?"

"I ain't got any."

"What!"

"My mother's dead and I ain't got no father."

The man reached down and drew Tommy up beside him.

"Well, yer little piker, I guess 'Red' Kelly kin find a place fer yer," he said, as he smiled down at the boy. The waif had met a friend. Tommy gazed about him in open-mouthed amazement. In the centre of the big loft stood a ring made of ropes, and from above four large lamps shed a bright light on the floor. Around the ring were a lot of chairs and benches, and near the door half a dozen men were congregated. Kelly explained the boy's presence, and then added: "There's no cops, an' I say let de scrap go on. De gang's gone, but we kin finish it fer de side bet."

Apparently this was agreeable, and Tommy saw two men begin to take off their clothes. Ah, now he knew! It was a prize-fight. Kelly assisted one of the men in putting on the boxing-gloves and began to whisper in his ear. Tommy squatted on a bench behind Kelly's corner, and when the latter happened to glance at the boy he was

dumfounded by the change in the youngster's appearance. Instead of a child's inscrutable face he beheld the ferocious countenance of a little savage. The boy's eyes had narrowed to two small slits, and his whole expression was one of such supreme pugnacity that the veteran of the ring pondered over it.

Of the fight that followed Tommy afterward retained only a dim recollection; but one thing impressed him strongly. It was the way in which Kelly's man kept after his opponent, and that he never forgot. He saw the blood come in each round, saw them knock each other down frequently and witnessed the men as they silently punched each other about through round after round, but he never tired of the brutal scene.

Once he heard Kelly say to his man, "Thirty-first comin', Jack," and the fighter replied, "I don't care—I kin stay fer a week," and on it went. Soon Kelly's man began to knock the other down more often, and finally he lay still. The man in the ring who wore clothes raised his arm and lowered it several times over the man who lay on his back. Kelly's man sat on his chair. The man who had waved his arm came over and gave Kelly a roll of money, and then Kelly took him home.

"Red" Kelly never regretted the fact that he gave Tommy Dunnigan a home. He sent him to school until he was fourteen and then began his boxing lessons. Step by step he taught him all he knew, and none knew more about the manly art than Kelly. The boy was a ready pupil and grasped the peculiar science of "hit, stop and get away" with wonderful aptitude. Kelly suffered one disappointment when he was forced to realize that Tommy would always be small. He had hopes that his protégé would grow into a lightweight at least; but when Tommy was sixteen years old he barely scaled one hundred pounds.

About this time the Legislature passed a law regulating boxing, and the

private prize-fights to a finish were superseded by the limited-round contests, and New York City became the Mecca of fighters. "Red" Kelly immediately came into his own and rolled comfortably along on the top wave of pugilistic prosperity. He had a lucrative "stable," but as he himself well expressed the situation, "Tommy is me best meal-ticket."

Tommy punched his way to victory through all the boys in his class, and when he was seventeen years old he wore the gold medal which was emblematic of the A. A. U. bantam-weight championship.

There were boys as clever as he, and some more so, but none of them could equal him in unrelenting aggressiveness. He was at his opponent from the clang of the bell, and never let up until his adversary was badly beaten or knocked out. Old-timers marveled at his viciousness in the ring, but they never knew of his first lesson in Cassidy's barn.

Tommy made his professional debut and then for a year fought regularly with unqualified success. The managers of the Broadway Athletic Club, before which all of the champions fought, finally offered Kelly a match for him.

He was informed that Willie Herman, the bantam champion, would give Dunnigan a match, provided Kelly would make a side bet of five thousand dollars. Herman had held the championship for several years and was considered invincible. He was making preparations for a trip abroad where he was to meet the English champion, "Kid" Wallace, in an international battle. Kelly was very confident of Tommy's ability to defeat the champion, even allowing for Herman's long and successful ring experience and his age, for he was many years older. However, the money question was a stumbling-block. Kelly would have to find a backer for Tommy. Why not see Mr. Jordan? He was a swell sport, he was, and he might take a chance. Besides, if he lost he'd never miss the money.

II

DAVIS flicked the imaginary crumbs from the spotless table linen, carefully placed the amber cordial within easy reach, then struck a match and held it to their fragrant panetelas.

"What shall we do, Ben?" asked Cummings, as he idly watched the discreet Davis moving silently out of hearing.

"I've engaged a box for the Broadway tonight, thinking you might join me there," replied the other.

"What's the play?"

"I mean the Broadway Athletic Club. I have taken a little flyer in Prize Ring 5's. That is to say," he continued, as he noticed Cummings's puzzled expression with a smile, "I'm the unknown backer of Tommy Dunnigan, who fights Willie Herman at the Broadway tonight for the championship, and I had hoped you would care to come along while I watched my investment."

"How came this?" asked Cummings disinterestedly.

"There is a man named 'Red' Kelly whom I know well. You probably remember the red-headed fellow who was connected with my racing stable several years ago. Well, that is he. Prize-fighting demands his attention now, but he is perfectly honest withal. A month ago he came to see me and told me about this Tommy Dunnigan, and I became interested in the little fighter."

"Little?"

"Yes; they box for the bantam championship, which is about one hundred and ten pounds."

"I don't fancy the small fellows," said Cummings indifferently; "the middle-weights are more interesting."

"I can't agree with you. The lighter the weight the less brutal the fight, and there is certainly more action in the bantam weights; but the life of this boy Dunnigan has been especially pathetic." And he related the story of Tommy's bringing-up.

Cummings's cigar had gone out and he sat, as he had during the entire

narrative, with his eyes on the speaker but with his thoughts afar. Jordan wondered if he had at last interested Cummings. During the past fifteen years these two middle-aged men had led their solitary lives, meeting occasionally during business hours and often at this exclusive club, but never until tonight had Cummings shown genuine interest in any living thing. Cummings's supreme indifference toward the world in general, his wonderful self-control and his usual impassiveness and imperturbability, which never changed beyond an air of well-bred cynicism, had marked him as a man of coldness and selfish concentration.

"It is mighty tough, Ben, when you think of it," he said thoughtfully. "The world hasn't dealt fairly with that little chap. His short life has been a long fight. He's been cheated out of his school-days and his best play days, too. No parents," he added reflectively; "no softening influence anywhere; no environment but muckers and brutality; no past and no future but the blood of the prize ring. Perhaps his father may have been at the ringside watching him fight and not known it. And his end—why, it's as sure as the season's—some cheap position in a gambling house or a drunkard in the gutter."

"Well, what's come over you, old man?" inquired Jordan in some surprise. "Your sudden overflow of sentiment barely escapes the maudlin," he added lightly.

"Oh, I guess not," he answered with a queer expression. "However, I want to see this quick asset of yours, and we had better start. Davis," with an almost imperceptible nod to that perfect servant, "my car."

As they rolled downtown in the powerful racing-machine Cummings was strangely talkative and Jordan pondered over the peculiar change in his friend. This he attributed to many things without satisfying himself, and then mentally decided that it would work out its own solution.

Two negroes were fighting a pre-

nary when they entered their box, but their efforts, while holding the rapt attention of the great crowd, received no more than an occasional cursory glance from Cummings.

"Do you know, Jordan," he said immovably as the fighters retired temporarily to their respective corners, puffing and heaving from their exertions, "that a fight between negroes appeals to my natural love of a contest about as much as a dog-fight, and if there is anything more brutal and disgusting than a dog-fight I have yet to find it out. How old did you say this boy is?"

"Barely eighteen."

Cummings surveyed the audience critically and was inwardly amused at the antics of the coatless men on the upper tiers as they occasionally hurled words of advice at the men in the ring or howled with glee when an especially hard blow landed. The private boxes were rapidly filling now with the real devotees of boxing to whom the final bout only appealed. Suddenly one of the fighters slipped to his knee and held up a glove.

"Go on! go on!" yelled his second, but he shook his head and did not move. The referee waved his hand toward the other man and then a perfect fusillade of fierce imprecations assailed the ears of the negro who had refused to continue.

"Oh, you cur! Get out, you yellow dog! Knock de stiff in de head!" was shouted at him; and as he hung his head and walked down the aisle toward his dressing-room, hisses and derisive cat-calls followed him as long as he remained in sight. He had broken his hand, which the spectators did not know; but perhaps that knowledge would have made no difference.

"Ah, here comes Dunnigan!" exclaimed Jordan, as a great cheer arose. A man with fiery, close-cropped hair was leading a number of seconds, and in the rear came a boy in a dressing-gown who stopped to shake hands many times. The boxer did not come up to the shoulders of his handlers, and among those square-jawed and

deep-chested men he looked delicate and sadly out of place. He sat in his chair, his face inscrutable, and the pallor thereon accentuated by his riotous black curls. Jordan noticed that Cummings did not remove his eyes from Tommy.

"That boy looks fragile," said Jordan, "and such a nice face, too. Just look at these brutes who are anxiously waiting for the time when he may be covered with blood. Ugh!"

"I have been thinking, Jordan," said Cummings a moment later, "that I have seen that youngster before. There is something very familiar about his face."

"Well, this is quite a coincidence," replied Jordan. "I saw the boy at his training quarters some time ago, and I was also immediately struck with his remarkable resemblance to somebody I could not place."

By this time Herman and his handlers had entered the ring and the champion shook hands with Tommy. Kelly recognized Jordan and walked over to his box.

"It's two to one on Herman," said the veteran, "an' it's good bettin' fer yer, Mr. Jordan, if yer care to lay any more."

"Not at that price, thank you," replied Jordan drily. "I don't fancy the short end of anything. Bring over your boy."

Tommy smiled down at them childishly when he was introduced, and when Cummings shook the little fighter's hand he marveled that it should be so small.

"How are you feeling, sonny?" asked Jordan, lacking something better to say.

The boxer shot a searching glance at him as he replied: "What made you call me sonny? Tommy Dunnigan is my name."

"Does it make any difference?"

"Oh, no, sir; but nobody has called me that since my mo—since I was a kid," he said.

"They don't call boys sonny in your ward," declared Jordan with a laugh.

"I know my name is Dunnigan, but

"I ain't Irish," he asserted stoutly. "Am I, 'Red'?" he asked, appealing to Kelly; but just then the referee said: "Come, boys, get ready."

Tommy turned and walked to his corner. Kelly also started, but a nod from Cummings stopped him.

"Bring him to my apartments tomorrow, win or lose," said Cummings, and he handed up his card to the surprised trainer.

While the shrill-voiced announcer was shouting the conditions of the match both fighters stood up and threw aside their dressing-gowns. They were of the same height, but here all resemblance ended. Herman was an ideal champion in build—albeit he was of small mold—with his large neck, broad shoulders and layers of muscles upon his back and legs to delight the eye of a sculptor. In direct contrast to this descendant of the tribe of Esau was his opponent, whose hairless skin was as smooth and fair as Carrara marble. There was little or no muscular development to be seen—in a word, he looked boyish and plainly unequal to the task before him. Cummings noticed his own hand on the railing. His fingers were steadily tapping the wood. What had come over him? He was actually trembling. He looked at the boy's innocent face and then placed one hand to his throat. How insufferably hot it was! A feeling of pity swept over him and—c-c-clang! The bell had struck.

The fighters, amid an oppressive silence, moved toward each other like two bantam roosters, and then in the next instant the roped inclosure seemed to the astonished Cummings to be literally full of arms and gloves.

No sooner was he within reach than Tommy went at his opponent like an infuriated wildcat. Before the champion had time to set himself Tommy was all over him, and when Herman realized the situation he fought back with a vengeance. The great crowd went simply mad with excitement as the human whirlpool in the ring swirled from one side to the other, separated for an instant and then resolved itself

into another seething vortex of arms, gloves and legs.

Around the ring they went, slugging each other unceasingly, blow after blow landing with the speed of lightning, and whenever the champion was forced to step back Tommy was at him again, never resting, never discontinuing his cyclonic attack. His blows fell upon the champion like hail, coming from every direction and with a telling force behind them. They were deaf to the frenzied shrieks of the audience and totally unaware of the fact that they were throwing their science and caution to the four winds of heaven. A chance blow, if landed on the right spot, would knock either of them out. The champion finally succeeded in clinching, yet he was in such a dazed condition from the furious onslaught that he dodged and ducked several times, even though Tommy's arms were absolutely motionless.

"What a change in that boy's face!" thought Cummings, as he saw Tommy trying to get free from the champion's hold. His expression of almost childish innocence had changed to one of insane fury—he was a little fighting devil. Just as the referee separated them the bell struck.

Cummings realized, as the fighters went to their corners and the great tension relaxed, how extremely wrought up he had become over the battle.

"It can't last long at that pace," declared Jordan; "another round will finish one or the other. Whew! but did you ever in your life see such a scrap—?" and then he stopped short.

Cummings was gazing over toward Tommy's corner with a face as pale as death.

"Oh, I say, Cummings, what's up?" he asked, laying a hand on the other's knee.

"Nothing," replied Cummings almost roughly, as he roused himself. "I can't get over it," he said vacantly; "I've seen that boy somewhere else."

With the stroke of the gong again did Tommy sail in with unabated strength. However, the experienced champion had gathered himself to-

gether and he evaded Tommy's rush by coolly side-stepping. He turned quickly as Tommy again rushed, measured him with an eye of a hawk and then—Tommy toppled over backward from the force of a right-hand swing which had caught him flush on the jaw. He bounded to his feet like a rubber ball and was at the champion like a flash, forcing him to retreat with an avalanche of stinging blows. It was jab, jab and swing after swing, upper cut and hook until the champion began to make wild swings in return like a crazy man; but he could not stem the tide. Tommy was playing for Herman's head, and the latter was doing his best to block, when Tommy suddenly shifted and drove his left and right to the champion's stomach. Herman dropped his hands with a look of agony and then grasped Tommy in mad desperation as his vicious antagonist came at him once more. Tommy fought himself free with terrible short-arm blows and again closed in on the champion, beating him back until at times he was himself staggered by the champion's wild swings, but always renewing his attack with the same unceasing vindictiveness. At last the champion was entirely on the defensive.

Cummings and Jordan were on their feet; in fact, every spectator was standing and yelling at the top of his lungs. Suddenly a frightful right-hand swing on the head put the champion down and he arose slowly. Again was he knocked over, and as Tommy stood above him waiting for him to get on his feet something struck his own foot. Looking down he saw it was a sponge. He turned and walked to his corner with the innocent face of a cherub. Tommy was the bantam champion.

He showed no effects from the battle when he appeared the next day with Kelly at Cummings's rooms. The latter shook hands warmly with Tommy as he asked: "How does it feel to be a champion?"

"All right, sir," he answered; "but I think I'm going to be champion of the world."

"Dat's right," explained Kelly. "Dis mornin' we cabled our forfeit to de National Club of London an' clinched a match wid Wallace. It comes off in two months an' we're going to send de rest of de side bet, four thousand, by Saturday."

Cummings was thoughtful for a moment. "That is very nice," he said; "but I'd like to give Tommy a position here with me. I need a young man to answer the bell, and he'll have a good home. He may go abroad and fight Wallace when the time comes and I'll pay him—oh, I'll use him right. What do you say, Kelly?"

The latter almost gasped with surprise. A real millionaire on Tommy's staff! It was a cinch. What did he say!

"I say he comes here, sure," he answered, with fervor.

"How about you, my boy?" said Cummings, turning to Tommy.

"I should like it, sir," he replied, with a smile.

When Jordan dropped in on Cummings shortly afterward he was nonplused to behold the bantam champion at the door.

"I felt very sorry for the youngster," said Cummings, in explaining Tommy's presence to him, "and I've concluded to help him along a little. He looks above this fighting game, and besides—I'm somehow greatly attached to him."

"Of course, you're old enough to know your own mind, but you're leaving yourself open to much unkind criticism. A prize-fighter for 'buttons'! It strikes me as being absurd. Why, you know nothing about the boy. He may be a mongrel." He argued the matter strongly with Cummings, but could not move his friend.

Tommy had been there about two weeks when Cummings came to him one evening as the boy stood at the open window looking down on the Avenue below. Cummings held something in his hand.

"I picked up this locket in your room this morning," said Cummings.

"Whose picture is this?"

"My mother's, sir," answered the boy quietly.

"Indeed! Will you tell me all you remember about her?"

Tommy related briefly everything that his memory recalled of the woman who had always been so good to him. "One thing she said I'll never forget," he concluded, "and that was 'to be more of a man than my father.' And I will."

There were tears in the boy's eyes as he turned and left the room.

"What's up now?" asked Jordan an hour later as he entered Cummings's library. He had made a hurried response to the latter's urgent telephone message. "Has little Tommy sailed for Europe without telling you of it?" he asked banteringly.

"Tommy isn't going to Europe to fight."

"What!"

Cummings shook his head with decision.

"How foolish!" said Jordan excitedly. "Then the boy will lose the five-thousand-dollar forfeit he has posted."

Cummings stood up. "I don't give a damn if he loses ten times that. I can pay it," he said forcibly. "Why, man, if you knew what I do you wouldn't let him get knocked down once for five thousand dollars."

He sat down and then smiled happily at Jordan, who eyed him in a most perplexed manner.

"Now you'll be glad to know this, Ben, I think. I know to a certainty who Tommy's mother was and who his father is. You knew her well, and you liked her. See that locket on

the table? It contains his mother's picture. Tommy and I are going out for awhile, but before I return I want you to look at it.

"I am going to take you to call on a nice old lady, Tommy," he said, when they were seated in the big touring-car.

They sped around corners and finally glided silently up a broad avenue. Tommy's eyes widened when they stopped in front of the great stone mansion. They alighted and were going up the steps when Tommy said:

"There goes your choffoor, sir."

"Never mind," replied Cummings.

The massive door was opened by the butler, who started perceptibly when he saw Cummings.

"Have I changed so much?" he asked, with a good-natured smile.

"Quite a bit, sir," replied the old, gray-headed servant. "It's many years since you've come— Very good, sir," he continued, as Cummings gave him a peculiar look. "I'll send at once, sir."

They seated themselves in the wide hall and Tommy's eyes fell upon the picture of a youth hanging opposite. Why, it looked like—! A gown rustled on the stair and he saw Cummings stand up. A sweet-faced old lady was coming toward them with her eyes shining.

"I've come home," he said, with a catch in his voice which was strangely like a sob; "I've come home to stay, mother." He put his arm around the boy and drew him close. "And I've brought home your—grandson."



HE ALONE ESCAPED

BEN—Did Archie disgrace himself at college?

FRED—Oh, no. His home folks were the only ones disgraced.

L'ORGUEIL ET LE SILENCE

CONTE CORÉEN

Par Camille de Sainte-Croix

QUAND la secte presque chrétienne des Tonghaksoutos eut bousculé toutes les vieilles sciences traditionnelles au pays du Matin calme, le Génie des Cinq Préceptes s'interdit de résister et de lutter. Il préféra s'abstraire de ce monde nouveau. Ayant élu pour séjour l'île déserte de Yésama, perdue en mer à distance égale des côtes de Chosen et de l'archipel des Ainos, il s'y établit dans une ceinture de rochers, aux sources du fleuve Shiou. Là, il faisait son unique occupation de se contempler dans le miroir du Passé, et dans la seule société de deux sombres camarades, l'Orgueil et le Silence, habituels conseillers du Génie.

Après bien des années de cette retraite, il advint qu'une nuit les caprices de deux courants marins portèrent à la fois sur la côte est et sur la côte ouest de l'île, deux flottilles étrangères, en égale détresse. A leurs feux, on pouvait distinguer que c'étaient, d'une part, des émigrants du Chosen, et, de l'autre, des émigrants Ainos cherchant aventure et chassés sans doute de leurs pays contraires par quelques récentes et simultanées guerres religieuses.

Le Génie des Cinq Préceptes n'admettait pas que l'on troublât son repos. Il appela ses deux compagnons: "Holà, frères superbes! Faites une menace de tempête; et chassez loin de notre île, à grands coups d'épouvantes, ces visiteurs importuns!"

... Mais tandis que le fracas d'orage s'apprêtait, la planète Ha-Yeun, la dernière de l'almanach Koang-Sang-Kan, passait dans les voies du Ciel, jetant au Génie son adieu matinal, avant de disparaître dans le jour levant.

Devinant l'œuvre des Solitaires, elle arrêta sa course. On vit peu à peu se détacher de l'orbite sidérale, le char de perroquets et de Kirins où souriait la blanche beauté descendue vers les rochers.

— Pourquoi es-tu si cruel à ces proscrire errants? demanda-t-elle. Et pourquoi cette éternelle solitude? Reprends donc goût à la vie. C'est si amusant! Là-haut, chez moi, ma planète est habitée. J'y regarde tout un monde naître, vivre, aimer; et je ne sais pas de spectacle plus passionnant!

— Non! Non! gronda le sombre Génie ayant consulté d'un clin d'œil ses conseillers intimes. Jamais personne, ici! Partout où il y a la Vie, les forts écrasent les faibles; et le Mal triomphe du Bien... C'est un spectacle que je ne veux plus voir!

— Tu as tort; et le véritable esprit des Cinq Préceptes n'est pas en toi! Tu n'es qu'un grand Génie avaro, vaniteux, irascible et fainéant! C'est ce fâcheux égoïsme qui seul te fait taciturne et méchant... Deviens au contraire, pour ces humains, une bonne Providence hospitalière, affable, tutélaire; et tu verras que la Vie est toujours bonne...

— Soit!... Mais je parie ma couronne grise contre ta couronne de roses que si je laisse les familles se former sur mon île, elles seront aussi incurablement mauvaises que partout ailleurs. Regarde bien: Ici, sur notre droite, la côte est agréable, la mer est unie, l'air tiède et le sol fertile; ceux qui s'ébattent en ce riant paysage trouveront toutes les sécurités et toutes les douceurs. Au contraire, sur notre gauche, les vents sont violents et froids, le sol est rocheux, rebelle aux cultures.

Quiconque habitera ce sinistre versant devra lutter contre les plus mornes apâtrés d'une nature ingrate; tous les mauvais penchants que peut développer chez l'animal humain la nécessité de créer ses ressources quotidiennes en feront certainement des êtres sans tendresse et sans grâce. Ici, la famille des Aïnos sur ces bords arides; là, celle de Chosen sur les plages fleuries. Le Beau et le Bien, auprès du Mal et de la Laidéur. Nous verrons qui triomphera.

— Le pari est tenu; et je n'ai pas perdu mon temps en causant avec toi, puisque sur mon avis, tu vas cesser au moins pour quelques âges d'être monotone et désœuvré. Mais voici le Soleil qui veut poindre. Je dois suivre la Nuit dans sa retraite. Adieu, grand Génie... Nous nous reparlerons dans douze cents Lunes, à compter de l'année Yeul-Mi, qui commence ce matin.

Le Génie tint parole. Il laissa se développer sur la côte ouest la race de Chosen, généreuse, artiste, simple et charmante; et, sur la côte est, celle des Aïnos, barbare et brutale sous l'âpre climat, sur le sol infécond, en pleine croissance de mœurs maudites et néfastes. Puis il contempla les uns et les autres, assis sur la roche, les pieds nus dans la source, attendant que les événements lui donnassent raison ou tort.

En apparence, ils lui donnèrent raison. La race de Chosen et la race d'Aïno, séparées par de naturelles barrières de falaises et de forêts, s'ignoraient longtemps et se développèrent chacune pour son compte, l'une atteignant l'apogée de sa félicité, l'autre exaltant à l'extrême ses instincts de violence et de rapine. Puis après maints traits d'Histoire, héroïques ou bouffons, comme il s'en voit dans toutes les annales du Monde, la pénétration eut lieu, et les conflits éclatèrent. Les bonnes gens de Chosen se virent accablés d'une invasion sans merci par les bandes féroces d'Aïnos.

Alors, le Génie conclut que son pari était gagné. Il arrêta l'horreur des massacres et des pillages en grossissant les eaux du fleuve Shiou jusqu'à les faire déborder en houle de flots inexorables, qui balayèrent et poussèrent

tout à la fois aux gouffres de la Mer, les Bons et les Méchants, rétablissant sur l'île déserte sa lourde royauté de Silence et d'Orgueil.

Les douze cents lunes étaient accomplies. Au soir promis, Ha-Yeun reparut sur son char de Kirins et de perroquets roses, et prévint le sourire victorieux du Génie.

— Crois-tu donc ta partie gagnée? Il faudrait pour cela que tu ne te sois pas contenté d'être un spectateur malveillant et sceptique. Nos conditions comportaient qu'en laissant ton île se peupler, tu deviendrais une Bonne Providence; or, c'est cela que tu ne sus pas être. Au lieu de laisser les Bons s'engourdir dans leur mollesse de race heureuse, il fallait leur ouvrir la voie d'entreprises allègres et vaillantes, prodiguant au dehors l'abondance de leur civilisation naturelle. Par leur féconde expansion, ils auraient gagné la terre des Mauvais pour y propager leurs germes de grâce et de joie. Le Bien eût alors triomphé du Mal; et c'est moi qui aurais gagné le pari! Mais tu ne l'as pas gagné non plus, puisque tu n'as pas fait ton devoir providentiel.

Le Génie était loyal. Il acquiesça, aigrement. Pourtant, dans sa mauvaise humeur, c'est à ses camarades qu'il s'en prit, leur reprochant de l'avoir mal conseillé.

Ha-Yeun, conciliante, s'interposa encore:

— Allons! Partie nulle! C'est à refaire! Mais si tu veux bien, nous la recommencerons chez moi. Malgré tes défauts, je t'aime, grand Génie, toi si rude et si fort! Laisse donc tes compagnons ici, puisque tu les a fait maîtres de ce néant; et puisqu'ils s'y plaisent. Deviens l'époux de mes bras blancs, de ma bouche éternellement rieuse, de ma poitrine qui se gonfle, toujours jeune. Porté par mes oiseaux vermeils, accède à mon astre souriant. Là, quand tu te seras instruit dans ma lumière, tu comprendras que le Génie fait mieux son œuvre en imposant à l'Univers des exemples d'amour et des images de bonheur, qu'en soumettant dans un rêve désert, sa pensée incertaine aux conseils rancuniers de l'Orgueil et du Silence.

THE PASSING OF GON OUT

By Theodore Waters

IF you go out by the Sound steamer route past Blackwell's Island those who know will point out to you the "Chinaman's Seat," which is a small rock situated halfway up the Manhattanward shore. Every evening at dusk a Chinaman used to come down from the prisoners' cook-house and sit blinking at the brilliance of the big boats with such strange persistence that in time he came to be pointed out as a curiosity and stories were told about him on the smoke deck.

The Chinaman was known as Gon Out, an island rendering which was sufficiently suggestive and which did him very well for a nickname. But he was more of a curiosity than the people on the boats guessed. He was a study, an object of pathological interest. His memory went back but a few years—not more than six, the doctors decided. Of his life previous to that they could learn nothing. He told them of crossing a big water, of wandering over a big land, of sufferings by the way, of his admission to the island as a vagrant. It was an unvarnished tale, and its vagueness would have been laid to the door of his Orientalism but for two things—one, that he was a Chinaman without religion, even without language, unless you reckon with his pigeon English, and as such had been cast forth from the ranks of his countrymen, who could not too fully despise the man who knew naught of and cared less for the bones of his ancestors; the other, that Watson, the house physician, who was a Mason, discovered one day that Gon had an inkling of the ritual.

Watson told the other doctors about it and worked with Gon a long time

in the hope that this might prove the connecting link with his past. But it was only an inkling, after all, and the curtain remained down. Although his efforts failed, Watson was willing to wager that Gon "was no Canton coolie before he stepped out of the ranks." When it was seen that he had no desire to run away, Gon was made a "trusty" and given a job in the cook-house which allowed him a certain amount of freedom.

One evening when he had been on the island five years Gon sat in his rock seat gazing with half-closed eyes at the reflections which wriggled over the water from the last and biggest of the boats. There was that in the reflections which reminded him of something he had seen in the past. He could not tell what the something was, and his face wore a puzzled expression as he tried to remember. Again and again he made the effort, but the more he thought the more confused he became, and finally, when the steamer had passed on and the reflections had thinned out and disappeared, he fell to watching the swells chasing one another along shore.

In the narrow channel the swells break heavily against the shore wall and the spray falls like a curtain on the rocks. While looking through this Gon saw a black rowboat bobbing uneasily on the crest of a roller about a furlong from shore. There was no moon, but he could see that no one sat in the boat. The tide was running out, the waves were going up obliquely and the opposing effects drove the boat steadily shoreward. Gon rose and followed it slowly along, watching it curiously. A big wave hurled it at last against the

abutment at the Chinaman's feet. He reached down and grabbed the gunwale to prevent the following swells from smashing it against the wall. There was nothing in the boat, and the painter dragged loosely over the bow. Probably it had broken away from some vessel bound out through the Gate. Gon hauled in the rope and when the last swell went by he tied the line to a bush on shore and went back to his rock seat to think about it. He sat there until his usual time to turn in, and then with a new light on his face stole off to his bunk in the shed by the cook-house.

Kerry Flanagan, the cook-house watchman, saw him go in and bade him good night patronizingly, and Gon responded without more than his usual unctious, a fact which afterward preyed upon Mr. Flanagan's mind and caused him to raise his voice next day in the presence of his superintendent.

"To think," said Kerry, "to think he could be that unconcerned like, and then go steal the bed slats from under him and run off unbeknownst to me. It wasn't like him, so it wasn't."

But Mr. Flanagan's imagination was limited, after all, by the appearance of things. Gon, after closing the door of his room on Mr. Flanagan, had quietly slipped two slats from his bed, climbed out of the window and made his way stealthily down to the shore; but plunder was far from his mind. He had merely become possessed of a desire to leave the island and had taken advantage of the situation in a manner least calculated to arouse suspicion. Casting off the painter, he got into the boat and, placing the slats in the oar-cleats, pulled out into the stream.

Gon had no idea where he was going. Indeed, he gave the matter not a thought. But this was characteristic. Five years' residence in a city institution and a natural Oriental capacity for irresponsibility are not likely to beget forebodings concerning the future. As might a child whose memory dated back but six years he had connected the boat with the idea of going somewhere, and having started on the

journey he was content to float with the tide. Presently he found that his bed-slat oars were of greater use in guiding than in propelling the boat, for, in spite of all he could do, they would turn sidewise to the ebb. But the current runs strong between Blackwell's Island and Manhattan, and in a very little while it had carried him abreast of the long point of rocks which forms the southern end of the island. He swung out into the centre of the river, where the water runs less swiftly than in the western passage, and here in the tide streak he drew in his oars and became part of the general drift.

The miracle of his safe passage through the maze of the river's activity was not more remarkable than his wonder at the panorama which sped before his eyes. What he saw was like a picture without perspective, for the sense of comparison was beyond his grasp. He saw things which, like the Sound steamers, almost opened the doors of his memory, but admittance was always denied to him. The strain made his head ache and he ended by taking refuge in that fatalism which is as the breath of the Asiatic, and all things became as one to him. The light, the dark, the pleasure, the pain, the heat, the cold, the distance, the direction—it mattered not. He moved with the tide streak and had he returned with the changing tide it would still have mattered not. But that was not part of the general scheme of things, for at last, without the raising of an oar, his boat went shoreward to the wharves which abut on Fulton Market. It missed the piling neatly and went into the dark beneath a pier without an effort on his part to stop it. Presently it grated against the inner platform.

Now this wharf was the retreat of that informal organization known locally as the Fish Market Gang, of which one "Bute," surnamed the Grumbler, was the distinguished head. And when Gon went in "Bute" and three brother wharf rats were even then sitting around a packing-box on the platform and having a little game of

"draw" by the light of a candle. A fifth member had gone for a can of beer, and the noise of Gon's boat was mistaken by the card players for the signal of his arrival. The Grumbler had just filled a straight and the others had prospects, so no one looked up at the moment. One of them growled out:

"Get a gait on, Danny. What was ye doin'—makin' it?"

As no answer came from the belated Danny, Bute turned with a curse. Seeing Gon rising from the boat in the semi-darkness the Grumbler jumped to his feet with a yell of "Cops!" He overturned the box and, followed by his companions, sped away into the darkness far up under the pier.

Gon got out of his boat and picked up the candle which lay spluttering on its side. Instantly there was a report and a bullet singed his head and buried itself in the piling beyond. The Chinaman yelped like a struck spaniel and dropped the candle. The light went out. Then, with the instinct of self-preservation, he fled into his boat and pulled from under the pier. Another bullet followed him out, but he got safely into the open. Sculling into the berth beside the wharf, he clambered up over the stringpiece into South street.

Passengers leaving a Fulton ferry-boat concealed his landing from the watchman at the head of the pier, and he followed the crowd westward. Gradually the crowd thinned out and he stopped, wondering what to do next. Then the roar of an Elevated train attracted him and he followed it up Pearl street. The wound on his head troubled him a little. He bound it up in a large bandanna handkerchief and trudged on. The bandanna absorbed without revealing to the casual passer-by the blood that pumped out of his wound every time he strained his neck to view the wonder of the "L" road overhead.

Once, as he looked up, a strange word babbled to his lips—a word he could not understand. It was such a curious word and it reminded him so forcibly of something or other he had

heard and forgotten that he repeated it over and over again. This word was *Fan Kwei*, which, translated literally from the Chinese, means foreign devil. Later on, after he had strained his neck again, another strange word came out. He stopped and repeated it—"Hsin tsai, Hsin tsai," again and again. *Hsin tsai* means first literary degree. Again, when a drunkard jostled him, he said quite fiercely, "*Samshu*," and passed on without knowing what it meant or why he had said it. He did not notice that this increasing vocabulary was making his bandanna wetter and wetter or that the number of the words was growing with the passage of the trains. And, as there are naturally many trains passing on that road, Gon had said many strange things by the time he was ready to step out into the tawdry brilliance of Chatham Square. Standing near the old Jewish burying-ground he could see directly across the square and into the vista of Mott street, with its lanterns shaking on the balconies, its chattering throngs and its overpowering odors. There was something intensely delightful about these things, and they drew him to them as iron is drawn to a magnet.

Chinatown is the Mecca for all the Chinese of Greater New York and the smaller cities nearby, and even among his countrymen Gon might not have attracted undue attention. But it so happened that his path crossed that of little Joe Enright, the lobbygar. The stray gamins who get their living mostly by running errands for the white women of the quarter are known as lobbygars. From the eyes of the lobbygar little is hidden, and the condition has its sinister aspects. Little Joe was deserving of neither more pity nor less censure than the rest of his class, although he might have been surprised to find that he deserved either. Just then he was in sore trouble. For a week he had pyramided the New Year's gig in that quarter lottery, the Bah-ka-pu, so dear to the Celestial heart and pocketbook, and all had gone his way until this day when,

with unaccountable inconsistency, his number had failed to come out. He had wandered down to the junction of Mott and Worth streets where, in the glare of the arc light, he stood looking cynically at the characters on the yellow paper ticket with the green border which proclaimed the reassuring legend that "the world is vast." Joe, whose philosophy was simple, uttered a profane truth concerning the Chinese and their ways and cast the ticket bit by bit into the gutter. Just then Gon Out stepped past in the full glare of the light.

"What a bird-lookin' Chink!" muttered the boy as, with the natural instinct of the grafter, he proceeded to dog the Chinaman's footsteps.

Gon wandered slowly along, looking with perplexity into the windows piled high with red and yellow gewgaws of the Orient, carved teak cabinets and ornaments of jade; into the cellarways hung with dried nests and cuttle-bone; at the balconies filled with sallow-faced Mongols, hurling jibes at one another in a strange tongue and breathing down the scent of rice liquor and rose wine. These indeed affected him strangely, but above all there was the powerful, all-pervading odor of the "dope" which was like a breath from the past and which filled him with vague desire.

In front of the Lee Hop Tong, which is a restaurant on the second floor of a tenement, stood a closed carriage with white horses, and on the sidewalk an expectant group of quarter riffraff. Evidently they waited for somebody to come out of the doorway.

Gon stopped and waited with the rest. Presently he felt his sleeve tugged, and turned to find a small boy who asked him in broken Cantonese if he would like to see where the lady lived, accompanying his question with a nod of his head toward the carriage. It was Joe Enright, who had marked him for a stranger and who scented possible perquisites for conducting him about; not from Gon, but from other individuals, his friends of the lottery, for instance, who might be much in-

terested in any yellow stranger in Chinatown. Gon shook his head with his old air of perplexity, for even in the boy's jargon he felt the vibration of the lost chord. Joe judged him by other lights and repeated his insinuations in another dialect. Gon replied in the English he had picked up on the island:

"No sabe you talk; talk all same me."

Its effect upon the lobbygar was tremendous.

"Hully gee!" he gasped. "He don't understand his own langwige."

It came into the boy's mind that perhaps Gon was a disguised emissary of the police. But he put the thought from him after another scrutiny of that placid countenance.

"Where'd you come from?" he asked.

"Islan'. Ribbah. Big boat, go by all time."

"Is that so?" Joe looked upon this as whole cloth, woven for the purpose of misleading him. Generally speaking, he knew the Mongolian habit of mind. He met it, therefore, with a truth which he supposed would be accepted as a lie. "Well, I come from the islan' meself, onct. Orphan. See?

"You come along wid me and I'll show you," he continued, leading Gon away from the crowd. "Dose people are waitin' to see Fook Chew's wife start back to China. Fook's rich. She's a little-foot, and dey say he had to give up a big wad for her, 'cause she didn't want to marry him in the first place. Mary Kelly, the 'White Rose,' says it'd 'a' been all right if he'd kept her in China where the women don't have much to say, but he goes and brings her to Ne' York and she gets onto the ways of the white goils. Fook takes to runnin' after the 'Rose,' and Mrs. Fook bein' put wise by one of her relations, she and Fook don't do a thing but have a run in. Now she's leavin' him and startin' for China. Maybe she wouldn't be let, though, if her relations wasn't in it. Say, we'll go back into the yard."

Most of this was lost on Gon, who was more interested in the long red streamers which waved uneasily under the eaves of the temple of Joss. They brought to his mind the reflections of the steamer lights, but before the comparison was quite complete he was compelled, perforce, to stop and ejaculate the words "*Ta Tsing Kwo*."

"Great pure kingdom," translated Joe, who knew this as a legend on one of the lottery tickets. To him it was evidence that the man was feigning ignorance of Chinese, but he did not mention it. "Yes," he went on, "it's a good gig, that. We'll see Lee Wong inside and maybe he'll let you have it."

The Bah-ka-pu lottery has, for obvious municipal reasons, no settled habitation, and the yellow tickets are sold literally from under the hats of the four or five men who run it. But Gon's mind was far from lotteries.

They turned into a dark hallway in one of the tenements. It was a narrow passage and ended suddenly on the brink of a flight of stairs leading to a cellar. At the bottom of the stairs they had to step over a drunken man or woman—they could not tell which—who had fallen there in the dark. They passed into a damp cellar, Joe leading Gon by the hand among the broken ginseng crates and through a jagged hole in a foundation wall where a gas flame burned dimly. Then they climbed up again into a rear tenement and passed down a hallway that opened out on a court.

It was a square-paved place, hemmed in on all sides by the tenements. It was the common area of communication between the buildings, and many passages opened out of it. A fugitive having gained this court would become lost to his pursuers, since he might choose any one of twenty exits. Lanterns hung on lines at various altitudes. An old Chinese stone bed stood at one side. A strip of carpet reached across the stones between two opposite doors. Chinamen sat on benches, stood in groups or lay about in careless attitudes. Many of them

smoked cigarettes, and all were in that picturesque undress which the average American never sees. Colored lights streaked from a hundred windows in the court walls, and over the sills leaned women in silk-figured wrappers. Some of the women were yellow and some were white; some still had the dope stick in their hands. The subdued singsong of the dialects rose up from the pavement and mingled with the hum from the windows. Above all could be heard the plaintive squeal of a Chinese fiddle.

"That's Fook Chew smoking over there on the stone bed by the wall," said Joe to Gon, as they stood in the shadow of their doorway. Gon had been looking up at the criss-cross of the window gleams, but at the word he brought his head down suddenly, and it was not good for his wound.

"Fook Chew!" He said it in a whisper that leaped sibilantly from wall to wall. And then, before the startled lobbygar could stop him, he had walked out into the half light of the court. At the sound of the voice Fook Chew's cigarette stopped halfway to his mouth and when he saw Gon it dropped to the flagging, but his hand remained up. The humming of the hive increased at sight of the newcomer. He stopped in the centre of the court with the bewildered air of one who, having found what he long sought, has as suddenly lost it. When the tension was greatest Fook Chew's wife stepped out of a doorway.

There was a straining of necks from the windows as the woman came forth, and a half-suppressed murmur of approbation, for her going would establish a precedent of value to every other woman in the quarter. She was gorgeously dressed, as befitted the occasion. Her cheeks were tinted with bismuth, but her head was bare. In her coif and on her wrists were ornaments worn only by Chinese women of high caste, and she hobbled across the strip of carpet with the air of one who knows that the way will be cleared, who in China might have the obstructing populace beaten aside with thongs,

But Gon Out at that moment was not a Chinaman, and at sight of her he stood in her way like one transfixed. She paused and stamped her foot angrily in front of this red-hooded apparition. He, far from recoiling, leaned forward and peered with great yearning into her eyes. He even touched her gently on the breast.

Instantly her people rose up from the flagging and the benches. The drone of the voices died out. The fiddle stopped its wailing. One brawny Mongol reached for Gon's neck. Probably he meant to get his queue, but he got the bandanna instead and it came away with a sucking sound that made the man who pulled it recoil from his work. But the crowd that pressed to the undoing of the man on the carpet strip never reached him. The instant the handkerchief went from his face the fire died from the eyes of Fook Chew's wife. She uttered an indescribable choking cry and fell senseless. Fook Chew rolled off the bed and groveled on the stones. A near relative of Mrs. Fook kotowed violently and uttered an invocation to the god of the dead, and the others, taking their cue from these, fell away slowly and gazed with superstitious awe at the strange being that had taken the place of Gon Out.

For with the wrenching away of the blood clot, Gon Out, the characterless, religionless nonentity of Blackwell's Island, had disappeared and in his place stood a dignified, high-caste Chinaman, who to his knowledge had not spent one moment of life outside the Flowery Kingdom. And they listened—the men on the flags and the women above—while in finely modulated tones this high-born Celestial poured forth a Chinese rendering of the dictum of Socrates:

... for neither in this nor in any other world can lasting harm befall a good man.

His countenance bore a nobleness of expression, even of outline, that had never existed on the face of Gon Out. But what impressed his listeners most was the feeling, instinctive to all, that the words he uttered were the comple-

tion of a sentence begun in China long years before.

He drew himself up as the words ceased flowing and seemed to realize for the first time the strangeness of his situation. He looked around him with startled amazement, at the fear-struck faces, at Fook Chew groveling on the flags, at the lanterns and the towering walls, at the windows filled with ribald women. He looked down at his own coarse clothes, and touched the hem of his blouse as he might, perforce, have touched the death shroud of the unclean. Finally his glance fell upon the upturned face of Fook Chew's wife.

"Yan-she."

Sometimes it is given to man to express his whole life's emotion in one word.

"Yan-she."

It rang from his lips like an appeal to the goddess of divination, and its echo came back like the voice of an oracle, pregnant with a hundred meanings. Love, doubt, faith, hope, hate, despair, reverberated between the walls, sighing, pleading, fighting for the mastery of this newly awakened soul, leaving him helpless for the moment, incapable of judgment; but finally, as he seemed to spell out the meaning of the situation, filling him with indignation so terrible of outward aspect that even the bravest of them there quailed before it. His was the attitude of the knight who has found his lady in the den of beasts and awaits the battle in her defense. He stood there eying them silently, a figure of might. When at last he saw that none meant to oppose him the rancor died out of his face and he turned to the still motionless form of Yan-she. Stooping, he tried to lift her and, as a final hemorrhage took him, fell heavily with her on the carpet strip.

And then from that court arose a sound which was not pleasant to hear—the weird, shrill voice of a mob in anger. The women in the windows calling to one another saw a mass of Orientals surging in front of the stone bed under which crouched Fook Chew, and on which one of his wife's relatives was

dancing about and gesticulating and pointing alternately at the man under his feet and the group on the carpet. Several of the more timid females withdrew from their window-sills and little Joe Enright, the lobbygar, rushed out through the cellar passages and into Mulberry street police station with a tale that hastily brought back the reserves. And yet Joe might have known better. He might have known that whatever was to be done in the case would never come to the eyes of anyone without the national streak of yellow in his veins. Even before the lobbygar had gained the street men began to extinguish the lanterns, and a big Chinaman with a stentorian voice ordered all the windows closed. Those who live under the domination of the Chinese know what it means not to obey. And so, when the police rushed in a few minutes later, they found only the moon peeping into a deserted court.

Now the following at least is true, as many denizens of the quarter bore witness: The wife of Fook Chew went back to China, for the carriage with the white horses, after waiting nearly all night in Mott street, drove off with her to the railway depot. And three days later a Chinaman of high rank was buried from the Masonic Temple in Pell street. His bier was visited by Kerry Flanagan, of Blackwell's Island, who was assisting a detective to iden-

tify the lost Gon Out. Little Joe Enright, the lobbygar, told them it was the man he had led into the courtyard, but Kerry declared positively that the dead man was not Gon Out. Joe told them a story of Chinese voodooism, in which a man was "changed" before his very eyes, but they laughed at him and kept up their still hunt assisted by one of the men who had been in the court that night.

Mary Kelly, the White Rose, told Fu Suing's German wife that Fook Chew once got jealous of a certain Charley Toy. He had warned her to have nothing to do with Charley, saying boastfully that before he had married Mrs. Fook in China she had favored another suitor and that this suitor had disappeared mysteriously and was never heard of again.

"I asked him if he killed him," said the Rose impressively, "and he wouldn't say yes, aye or no. But after what *we* saw I'll bet every dollar I've got on the Bah-ka-pu that it was 'that man.'"

If you ask in Chinatown today what has become of Fook Chew you will find everyone singularly uncommunicative. Even Joe Enright, the lobbygar, does not care to tell all he knows of what happened that night in the courtyard. Once, when asked if he thought Fook Chew was dead, he said "No" quite positively, and then added: "But you bet he'd like to be."



HER CHOICE

MADGE—She's engaged to a young clergyman.

MARJORIE—That girl always did like the good things of this world.



A FAIR EXCHANGE

"YOUR cow got into my garden, sir, and ate up all of my vegetables."
 "Well, sir, I'll send you over a couple of quarts of her milk."

RONDEAU TO A HELPFUL FRIEND

YOUR bright idea I tried to use—
 Too proud a boon lightly to lose!
 The sparkling treasure of your thought
 I bore away, and patient wrought,
 The gem in words of fire to fuse.

Alas! my dullard brain accuse!
 Gone was the sheen of rainbow hues
 That flashed, when first my fancy caught
 Your bright idea!

Slow moved my wit in leaden shoes;
 To curse my quill I could but choose,
 And pace the floor like one distraught!
 Ah! here's the secret, vainly sought—
 I needed, to inspire my muse,
 Your bright eye, dear!

MARGARET JOHNSON.



IRRESISTIBLE

TED—What attraction can our society girls see in those foreign noblemen?
 NED—They cost so much.



HIGHLY DEVELOPED

ROCKSEY—Has this young man any business ability?
 MISS ROCKSEY—I should say he had, papa. While he could have had several poor girls, he decided he wanted me.



"HOW long ago did Herbert take his college degree?"
 "It must have been some time, for he is already getting to be companionable."

THE REWARDS OF PERSEVERANCE

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF CONSTANTINE DIX

By Barry Pain

I WAS about to pay my usual spring visit to Brussels. At this time of the year the Belgian Paris is particularly attractive to me, and the man who buys my diamonds lives in Brussels.

As a rule I combine business with pleasure. The trouble was that on this occasion I had no diamonds. They are a form of property in which I like to deal: small, valuable, and—apart from their setting—difficult of identification. I remove the settings myself and throw them away. It may possibly be remembered that some years ago a man made a curious find on the Underground Line between Gower street and King's Cross. He found what I had intentionally lost. I never attempt to get the melting-pot value of settings. The risk is quite out of proportion to the profit. If I get a few hundred pounds' worth of diamonds I am content. In this business, as on the Stock Exchange and elsewhere, people lose money through opening their mouths too wide.

It is a rare thing for spring to come round and find me with nothing in my pocket to show to my good friend, the merchant in Brussels, but it was the case this year. I had been busy on other matters. I now began to think out some simple way of supplying the deficiency.

As I turned the pages of the *Morning Post* my eye was arrested by the announcement that a marriage had been arranged; and would take place on the third of the following month, between General Welbrand, C.B., and Made-

line, youngest daughter of Sir Charles Wray, Bart., J.P., M.P., of Ditton Field, Withycomb, in the County of Norfolk.

The advertisement was of interest to me because I know something of Ditton Field. Ikey once had to admit a defeat there. He was not detected; he simply had to give the thing up after five hours' hard work. During those five hours he assured me that he had been within an ace of being shot by spring guns several times over. He came away with absolutely nothing but a sprig of rosemary which, so he said, he had picked in the garden to remember Sir Charles by. He attempted to make the journey back to London without a ticket in a goods truck, and, owing to a miscalculation on his part, was sent fifty miles in the opposite direction before he had a chance to escape. He has always spoken to me with some bitterness of his Ditton Field experiences.

I thought it might be interesting to hear what Ikey had to say on the subject now. I met him coming out of the reading-room, and he began at once. He never fails to read the "Fashionable Intelligence." "And," he said, "the presents will be 'numerous and costly,' as the papers say. The duke, her godfather, is good for a diamond tiara, anyhow, and there is not the ghost of a chance for anybody—not a blooming earthly. Mind, I wouldn't take it or think about taking it if there were. I'm a reformed character, as you know. Still, it is funny to think of all that good stuff

lying about loose in the big billiard-room, 'so near and yet so far,' as the song says."

"Ah, Ikey," I said, "you'd better give up thinking about it. The best way to avoid temptation is to put the subject from one's mind altogether."

"Who's talking about temptation? Look here, Mr. Dix, I might want the moon and I might talk about the moon, but I shouldn't take it. For the same reason I shouldn't take the stuff from that billiard-room. Do you think I don't know? I went back there when the second daughter was married. They'd two detectives in the house for days before, and those wedding presents were never left for one moment day or night. Even if you could get into the house you couldn't do anything, without you chanced making a swinging job of it. No, you needn't get nervous about me, Mr. Dix; you've shown me the error and you can depend on my word that I keep out of it for the future."

I could not in the least depend on his word; indeed, this was only a few months before the time when, under the influence of a little drink, he rejoined his old companions and fell back into evil courses. I said to him now that he would do well to show a less boastful spirit, and pointed out the need of constant watchfulness.

When I got back home I sat down to think the thing out. On the face of it it was clearly a case for drugs. The difficulty would be to administer them. Sir Charles would undoubtedly deal with a first-class firm, and the detectives supplied would be good men. They would go straight to the house on their arrival and probably would not leave it, certainly would not leave the grounds until their work was over. It seemed to me that my only way of getting access to them would be to obtain employment of some kind in Sir Charles's household. This meant the assumption of a disguise, a careful sustaining of a new character and the writing of a few forged testimonials. Frankly, I did not like it.

The disguise and the alias are dan-

gerous weapons and, where they do not succeed perfectly, they damage the man who uses them. It was extremely improbable that I should be able to get a post as an indoor servant; my best chance would be as a groom or common laborer. That would mean that I should have to live and to work as a man of that class would. To all of this I had the strongest objection, but I did not see what else I could do.

About a week before the marriage took place I went down to Withycomb and put up at the hotel there in my own name. They warned me that all their rooms were taken for the night before the wedding, and if I stayed on then I should have to go to the village beer house, a place where I felt sure I should be supremely uncomfortable.

Things were not going well. However, I looked about the place and found an empty cottage standing by itself some distance from the village. It struck me that this would be an ideal spot in which to effect my disguise. The next afternoon I entered that cottage as Constantine Dix, a gentleman from London, interested in geology and on the search for specimens. That was the description I had given of myself at the hotel. The small bag that I carried contained all that I wanted in the way of a disguise. I left the cottage, half an hour later, as William Bradshaw, gardener, highly respectable, but in indifferent health, with a good place to go to in two months' time, and urgently in need of a job to tide him over until then.

Again my bad luck followed me. The Scotch head gardener, a sulky-looking brute, would neither hear my story nor look at my testimonials. He repeated that he didn't want anybody and there was nothing for me. When I lingered and persisted in trying to tell my story, he said that he would give me just one minute to get out of the place and that after that he had a very good terrier. I got out of the place within my minute and I made a mental note of that head gardener. It is not a crime to ask for work, and I had not begged. It seemed to me that

he was a man who should one day have a lesson. I heard afterward that special orders had been given that no strangers were to be allowed to hang about the place under any pretext whatever. Also, I fancy that no servant was ever taken on there without a personal character and a prolonged and searching examination into his past history.

The only thing now before me was to go back to my cottage, resume the character of Mr. Constantine Dix, pay my hotel bill and go home. But I could not bring myself to go just yet. I had taken a good look at the house when I was trying for work there, and I determined to have another look at it that night.

My bedroom at the hotel was on the first floor and gave me a fairly easy chance of coming and going at night without detection. I climbed down from the window at about three the next morning, the rain-water pipe affording me sufficient assistance.

The billiard-room at Ditton Field is a big room, built out by Sir Charles at one side of the house. There are no rooms over it and one end is in view from a narrow country lane. I went down the lane, looked and saw nothing. Not one spark of light came from the window. I was just coming to the conclusion that Ikey had made a mistake and that no watch was kept over the presents at night, when I noticed smoke curling up from the chimney of the room. A fire, then, was burning there, and a fire would not be burning unless someone was sitting up.

The lane comes within ten yards of the end of the billiard-room and the fence offered no difficulties. I went with the utmost caution, feeling for places for my feet with my fingers, to be sure that there were no wires. I did not find anything of the kind, and possibly Ikey exaggerated the dangers he had gone through to cover a clumsy failure.

I came close up to the wall and reached up my hand to the window above me. It was steel-shuttered. Even if there had been no detective

inside it would have been impossible to tackle without burglar's tools, and these I never carry. As my fingers touched the steel I suddenly felt it begin to move under them. I had no time to get away, nor did it seem to me that there was much necessity. I stood close under the window, pressed tight against the wall, and it was a dark night. A man might have opened the window and looked out without seeing me.

Presently a man did look out. The steel shutter moved slowly up, and the light streaming upon the grass showed me a man's shadow. Then the window was pushed up. I could smell coffee and hear the chink of the cup. Presently the man leaned out. I heard a match strike and I could smell his cigarette. He smoked that cigarette out of the window and made it last for twenty minutes, during which time I remained motionless and made no sound. Then, to my great relief, the window was shut and the steel shutter, operated from the inside, came slowly down. I went back to my hotel with the comfortable feeling of a man who, after encountering difficulty and disappointment, at last sees his way clear.

The ascent to my bedroom was not easy, but I managed it without noise or mishap of any kind. Before I went to sleep I reviewed the situation. The billiard-room was left in charge of a detective all night. Once at least in the course of the night he opened the window and renewed the air in the room. That would be quite natural, especially as a close atmosphere would tend to make him sleepy. I felt that I could depend upon it; he might very possibly leave the window open all the time he was there, but ten minutes would be quite enough for me. During those minutes locks and bolts and shutters, for all practical purposes, would have ceased to exist, and it would simply be a question whether he or I were the more intelligent and capable man. Without prejudice I felt assured that I was.

The window in question was something between six-feet-six and seven

feet from the ground. I gathered that at this end of the room was the usual raised platform, and that the top of a table placed on it would come very near to the bottom of the window. I was certain that this was the platform end of the room, because the window at the other end came some three feet lower down, as I had noticed when I was trying to talk to the head gardener. On the table would be placed the detective's refreshments; I should hardly have heard the chink of the cup and smelled the coffee so distinctly if they had been further back in the room. Probably the billiard table would be covered over and the display of presents would already be arranged on it, on the eve of the wedding, in readiness for the reception to follow. I should be able to see into the room, once the shutter was up, either by climbing a tree in the lane ten yards away or on the grass under the window by standing on something that would increase my height—six feet—by one foot. I proposed to drug the detective, either through his cigarette or his coffee. I had not yet decided which, and both presented difficulties. It was clear to me that there was no point in my remaining longer at the hotel, and my absence might tend to avert suspicion. I decided to leave next morning and return on the eve of the wedding on my motor, with my plans completed.

Next day I was back in London buying a few trifles which I required to make clean work of it. Ikey would not have made clean work of it. He would have tried a surprise entry through the window, calculating on frightening the detective into silence with a revolver or overpowering him before he could call or get at the bell-push. And it would not have answered. I fear he would have made, as he said, a swinging job of it. Personally I hate violence; I hate bloodshed. If diamonds could be obtained only by such means I would leave them alone and take something else.

I happen by chance to be tall and broad and of considerable muscular

strength. A man like Ikey has a great admiration for that, says so plainly and turns me sick; I feel as if I were being treated as a prize beast. It has happened sometimes—inevitably, I suppose—in the course of my work among very rough characters that I have had to resort to the lowest methods. It has become necessary for me to get a man out of a room or to hit him hard. One does it if it is necessary, but one might be spared the disgust of being congratulated. The mental qualities are higher. When my mind prevails against the mind of another I feel some satisfaction, but I try to keep myself from that silly vanity which leads to an ambitious and fatal attempt to achieve the impossible. I remember that the spiritual qualities are higher still. Among the worst and the hardest I have picked out now and again the most hopeless case of all. Friends have pleaded with me not to waste my efforts and others have ridiculed me, but I have stuck to my man and, after repeated failures, have brought him to a new life. There lies my spiritual triumph; but that, too, brings me no vanity—only steady submission where struggle is useless—submission to that which is foreordained. For there are some whom we think lost that are meant for the rescue, and there are some—myself among them—who have a good place among men, whose virtues are credited, whose fame is unspotted; and these are to go on to the end without hope. It is a subject to which I had intended hardly to allude and one on which I will not dwell.

I told my housekeeper, Mrs. Pethwick—an elderly but invaluable woman—that I was going to take the motor down to Brighton for a couple of days. She saw that my bag was packed, and I gave her an ordinary leather-covered ink-pot to put in it—one of those that fasten with a couple of springs. The word "Ink" was stamped in gold on the top of it, but the liquid inside was not ink. It looked like it in the ink-pot, but the color was really dark brown. You would have found, on searching my motor-

car, three feet of fine metal tube and an india-rubber bulb, and you would have concluded that they had some connection with the mechanism of the motor; you would have been wrong. I had my big pocket-knife in my pocket. I was starting off to steal diamonds of great value, watched by a detective, and this was all the apparatus I took with me for that purpose. I also took my special cigarette—that cigarette which will be the last I ever put to my lips—but this was for afterward, in case of failure and capture.

I reached Norwich in time for dinner. I admit that it is not essential to take Norwich on the way from London to Brighton, but I had not told Mrs. Pethwick that I was going by the most direct route. I had merely said that I was going to Brighton, and I did go there ultimately.

At dinner, somewhat to the disgust of the waiter, I fear, I drank one bottle of soda-water, and after dinner I slept for an hour in the smoking-room. I was extremely pleased that I was able to get to sleep quite easily. It showed me that my nerves were in good order.

I left the hotel at about ten and drove my car easily along in the direction of Withycomb, which is perhaps twenty-four or twenty-five miles from Norwich. The country about here is not very populous and the inhabitants go to bed early. I felt quite secure in running my motor into a field and leaving it hidden behind a couple of stacks. From this point I went on foot to Ditton Field, taking with me the apparatus which I have already described.

I could see from the lane that the steel shutter of the window of the billiard-room was not quite closed; the lower three inches were open and the window was open behind it. I thought it likely that it would remain like this for the rest of the night. Of course this meant that I could not command a view of the room from a tree in the lane. I had to get to the grass just in front of the window and find something to stand upon which would bring

my eyes on a level with the narrow opening.

I was in no particular hurry, and I explored the place with the greatest care and found in an unlocked potting-shed a solid wine-case, which I thought would serve my purpose. I kept away from the lodge, the gardener's cottage and the house itself as much as possible in case a dog might discover me. Dogs were what I was principally afraid of that night. I do not mean that I was afraid of a dog attacking me; a dog that did that would die before any great harm was done to me. It was the noise that I wished to avoid.

I brought the packing-case up with me to my position in the lane, and from there I watched the narrow strip of light at the bottom of the window for any sign of movement. The night was pitch dark and it had now come on to rain hard. For an hour or more I saw nothing, and then I got a glimpse of a moving hand and a shirt cuff and something that looked to me as if it might be the base of a coffee-pot.

The moment for action had now arrived. I fixed the india-rubber bulb on one end of my long metal tube, dipped the other end into that ink-pot and released the bulb. The tube was now charged with the drug which was to do the work for me. I put my packing-case in position on the grass just in front of the window, with the tube beside it, mounted the case and got my first view of the interior of the room.

At the table near the window sat the detective—a pale young man, with a plaintive eye, who sat munching ham sandwiches in the ruminative manner of an ordinary cow. His cup of innocuous and sleep-dispelling coffee was by his side. The display of presents was already arranged on the billiard-table and other tables in the room. From the position in which I stood it would have been quite easy for me to have reached the coffee-cup with my metal tube, and, by squeezing the bulb, to have discharged the poison into it. But the detective would have

seen me, and the snare should not be laid in sight of the bird. It was necessary for me to attract his attention elsewhere.

I went around to the other end of the billiard-room, opened the nail file in my pocket-knife and drew it once, sharply, across the steel shutter, immediately returning to my position by the opposite window. I had reflected that this course might be disastrous. The detective might have gone straight to the electric bell which would have summoned his comrade. But I was right in supposing that he would be reluctant to disturb his friend's sleep until he knew beyond question that there was some need for him. The sound which I had made on the steel shutter was suspicious and would attract him to that end of the room, but he would wait for something further before he rang.

Looking through the window I could see him at the further end of the room with his back to me, listening intently. He had already got his revolver out. Leisurely, though with proper care, I put one end of my tube through the window till it was immediately over the coffee-cup, and pressed the bulb very slowly and gently. I fancy that a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes must have elapsed before the detective decided that he might return and finish his coffee, and that the sound which he had heard was probably nothing more than a twig of some tree which the wind pushed against the shutter.

After this for awhile things seemed to go very slowly. The detective took his coffee in small sips at considerable intervals. When one has absolutely nothing to do a cup of coffee is an incident. One prolongs it; it breaks the monotony. He finished it at last, lit his pipe and picked up a journal devoted to the interests of the amateur photographer.

The action of a drug depends to some extent on the idiosyncrasy of the person who takes it. With my friend the action was slow, but it came at last. His pipe fell to the floor with a crash

and he sprang to his feet. He had actually been to sleep! He was still drowsy. If he had been wise he would have rung the bell at once.

I now crouched low under the ledge of the window, for I knew what would happen. The steel shutter flew up and the man thrust his head out. The cold night air, he thought, would dispel his sleepiness. He had relighted his pipe. In a few seconds it fell at my feet and his shadow disappeared.

I mounted my packing-case in an instant and saw him trying to make his way to the bell. He swayed and staggered in the intoxication of the drug. As he neared the bell and had his hand out toward it he collapsed, went over and lay like a log.

I waited for a little to see if the noise of his fall had aroused anybody, and then put my hands on the ledge of the window and pulled myself up into the room. My attention was attracted first by a square morocco case, of apparent magnificence and emblazoned with a crest and initials. The card upon it signified that it was the gift of the Duchess of Tadcaster. I opened it and found that it contained six small silver coffee-spoons, total value nine shillings. I could not help writing upon the card that this was really very shabby of Her Grace, and then I got on to serious business, going for diamonds only.

It was without exception the biggest haul I ever made in my life. The mere removal of the stones from their settings took me days of work afterward.

I then turned my attention to the detective. I undid his collar and put him in a better position. He murmured something about being "done for," but I think he was really unconscious and supposed that he was talking to the other detective. I let myself down from the window and went back to the lane.

As I took a last look at the house a police whistle sounded shrilly—I heard the continued whir of more than one electric bell, and window after window sprang into life. I saw, of course, what

had happened. The other detective had entered to take his comrade's place the moment after I had left.

I got out of the lane at once into a field. On these occasions it is always supposed that the burglar will be obliging enough to confine himself strictly to streets or roads or other places patrolled by the police. This is not always the case. I got back to my motor in safety, put my diamonds, roughly tied up in a couple of handkerchiefs, under one of the seats and

started off. As soon as I was in the road I got on to my third speed at once, and after that I felt perfectly secure. A policeman did challenge me, but this was forty miles away, and I think he merely wanted my name and address for exceeding the speed limit. But I was busy at the time and could not stop. Naturally, I was very late in arriving at Brighton, but, as I explained to the old couple who look after my cottage there, the best motor-cars break down sometimes.



A MEMORY

YOU were once the heart of a perfect day,
Life as a light beat out from you;
At parting we kissed and you went your way,
And you waved farewell as you passed from view.

You gave me much and I asked no more,
For more had shattered the perfect spell;
It was better to taste of love's sweet lore
Than drink the wine and the dregs as well.

You cannot change, and you cannot fade,
As they ever do that we love and hold;
I have walled my heart lest the world invade,
But for you I have fashioned a gate of gold.

You come unbidden, forever young,
And for you I can lay the years aside;
Unscathed by Time or by Envy's tongue,
We parted in love—and the world is wide.

P. McARTHUR.



THE CHILD OF TODAY

WILLIE—Mama, can't sister Adele come out and play with me?

WILLIE'S MAMA—Certainly. Just run upstairs and tell her she has worked enough today on her historical novel.

Oct. 1904

A HONEYMOON

(WITH ASIDES)

SHE—Do you love me?

HE—Do I love you? (Great Scott, but I'm getting tired of this.)

You know, dear, how much I love you.

SHE—But do you love me as much as you did? You called me "darling" yesterday, and now it's just "dear."

HE—You silly little goose. (Oh, what a jar! Heavens, have I got to keep up this lovey-dovey business forever?) As if outward expression of *any* sort was adequate to describe my feelings for you. Why, my darling precious little sweetheart, I—

SHE—That's better. Now, kiss me.

HE—There, how's that? (Oh, my, oh, my, I haven't had a smoke for three hours, and there's no prospect of being able to break away.) And that! And that!

SHE—Well, why do you stop?

HE—I wasn't stopping, dearie. (What's the use?) I was only getting my second wind. (Oh, what can I do to sneak away for a little rest? Let me see.) By Jove, that reminds me.

SHE—Of what? I hope it's of me.

HE—Oh, of course. (Isn't this fierce? Why, I can't even take a vacation in my mind.) Yes, it was of you, pet, in a way. The fact is, I haven't got our return tickets yet. (Now for a quiet hour by myself.)

SHE—Must you get them now?

HE—Oh, yes, sweetie. ("Sweetie" is a new one. Hope she notices it.) The seats must be secured at once, you know.

SHE—Then I will go with you.

HE—(The deuce!) But, my honey-jam (there's another!), can you stand the walk? It's several blocks, and they're long ones, too. (I begin to see my finish!)

SHE—But why walk, darling? Why not get a carriage? You know we can drive slow, and pull down the blinds.

HE—(Well, there doesn't seem to be any rest for the weary. And if any man needs a change, I do. Three weeks now of lovey-dovey! My, but this is wearying.) Why, that's so, my peacherine! I hadn't thought of that. I'll run right downstairs and order a carriage at once. (It will take ten minutes anyway without arousing her suspicions. That will give me a breathing spell.)

SHE—You cruel, horrid thing!

HE—(Now I'm up against it again!) Why, precious pet, what do you mean?

SHE—I just *know* you don't love me.

HE—(Now wouldn't that jar you!) But, darling, what have I done?

SHE—Why, don't you know you can *ring* for a carriage?

HE—(I'm in for it now!) Why, sure! Of course. Why didn't I think of it before?

SHE (*tapping him gently on the cheek*)—Well, never mind. But now, you careless, forgetful boy, you'll have to make it up to me.

HE—(What's the use?) Of course, sweetmeat! What now?

SHE—I shall expect you to kiss me one thousand times without stopping!

HE—(And all I've got to look forward to is a lifetime of this!) Yes, sugar-plum!

A LAND A GREAT WAY OFF

By Zona Gale

THE Juliet of that night's performance tapped her cardboard check impatiently on the window of the baggage-master's office.

"Please," she said again, with a little offended intonation, "I am in a great hurry. It's a big gray canvas one, with a strap."

The baggage-master caressed his forehead with the back of his hand, wrinkling his face horribly.

"You know, miss," he observed, "the trunk hain't been settin' here waitin' your arrival; nor no more hev I. You can't expect——"

A sympathetic sniff from Jerry, the great, grinning savage who was assistant at the little Sun Prairie station, caused his chief to lift his eyes. They met those of Miss Cressida Tower, who was the Juliet, and the baggage-master faltered. Such big, tired, lit-from-within eyes she had that other people before him had faltered no less obviously. The chief turned on his lounging aide.

"Look alive, Jerry!" he called in a terrible voice. "Wot's your business w'en the lady says a big gray one, with a strap?"

A moment later the baggage-master was pointing a deferential, corduroy finger in the direction of the hotel.

"We'll have it down to the John Calhoun House in a half-hour, miss," he promised with the condescension of an oracle. Then he looked after the Juliet as she walked down the hot board sidewalk.

"Member of the Great Casino and Lyceum All-Star Repertory," he deduced.

The Great Casino and Lyceum All-

Star Repertory Company boasted no advance-agent, no press-agent and no business manager. Mr. Jefferson B. Marlybone stood for all three officials and was the Romeo and the Brutus and the Claude Melnotte and the Armand, as exigency demanded. It chanced that Mr. Jefferson B. Marlybone was, at the moment, not on friendly terms with the leading woman named in the iron-bound contract which she held with him. Consequently, when he arrived at the desk of the John Calhoun and found that hostelry already nearly filled by the delegates to the Sun Prairie Methodist County Conference, he engaged the remaining rooms for himself and the minor members of his company, and congratulated himself upon having neatly inconvenienced the leading woman.

When Miss Cressida Tower, therefore, eventually reached the hotel she was told by a faint, polite clerk that there was not a room in the house. He followed her to the door, thumbs in the armholes of his oilcloth waistcoat.

"Why don't you try Mis' Ephraim Meadows?" he inquired argumentatively.

Miss Tower expressed her weary will-
ingness; and who, she asked, might Mis' Meadows be? Mis' Meadows might be a widow-woman, the clerk made answer, who took roomers since the Sun Prairie City Bank had suspended; four blocks up and one over, house with the lilacks.

Miss Tower gave directions about her trunk and hurried away. It was four o'clock, and the lining of Juliet's cloak was torn and one of the tinsel

lilies on the friar's cell gown was raveling out. She must mend those before the performance. She wondered if they had found the balcony rail yet; the last time she had played the scene she had had to look down at Romeo in the garden from a balcony so abrupt that it resembled a fire-escape.

A great breath of fragrance suddenly swept her face, and a long line of purple lilacs nodded to her. This was the "house with the lilacs" then—this little box of a house, with a faintly greening curtain of vines and a faintly greening square of lawn and—yes, a little painted fountain. She caught her breath with delight, and lifted the gate-latch. A great golden-eyed collie stepped down the walk to meet her, a canary was singing from the porch, a workman was mending the side fence and whistling with pleasant monotony.

"Oh," said Miss Tower as she pulled the jangling bell, "she won't have any room for me, either. It's too nice here."

But Mrs. Meadows had a room. Her face—tired, kindly, without surprise—smiled on almost without her knowledge as she talked. It was a front corner room, and it was sunny, and there was hardly any noise from the side alley. Dear, no, she did not object to taking an actress. The young gentleman that had had the room was a musician himself; yes, indeed, he played the fiddle in the orchestra at the opera house. He was just moving into the back room, and his pictures were not all out yet, if she didn't mind that? She might come right in and right up and look at the room. It could be got ready in no time.

White walls, white bed, spotless white woodwork and cream-colored matting made the room a very practical haven to the travel-worn little Juliet. She threw off her hat and leaned joyously out of the open window, watching the shy May shadows on the lawn, hearing the workman's whistle and the swallows overhead. And Sun Prairie had been selected as only a one-night stand! Usually a convention town

was a gold mine, but Mr. Jefferson B. Marlybone had learned that this convention was a conference and had booked at the Sun Prairie Opera House for only one night. Ah, well! this was the one night and she would make the most of it.

Mrs. Meadows was busily removing a pair of foils and a few photographs from the mantel.

"They belong to the young gentleman that's just movin'," she explained easily, wiping the glass of a picture in a little black frame. The face caught Miss Tower's eye, and she went nearer and looked at it curiously. It was the face of a young girl whose simple, low-cut bodice might have been of any period, yet the photograph had the unmistakable mark of a bygone time. The young face was crowned by braids of brown hair and lighted by wonderful eyes. "From Mother to her Dear Boy" was written below. Miss Tower held it for a moment, enviously struggling against the memory of her own mother as she had last seen her—rouged and with bobbing skirts and bobbing curls, in the back row of the chorus.

"Poor mother," she thought, "poor Mademoiselle Fadette! I wonder what her own mother looked like? But I—I've been started without my chance. Why, I—no wonder I never got an engagement in town—started that way, without my chance!"

When the room was quiet Miss Tower leaned idly at the window, awaiting her trunk. Dressing-rooms were only brusquely and casually considered in the building of the Sun Prairie Opera House, as in all the one-night-stand theatres in that Western State. Also, there was no stage entrance, and those who assembled early might see the players arrive by way of the main doors and, laden with costumes, hurry down a side aisle to the big swinging door. Side seats were considered choice because they offered such a superior view of the same swinging door, opening between acts to emit an odor of mingled lamp smoke and tableau powder as the star and the

"heavy" came out to visit the Sun Prairie Opera House Buffet and Café. Hence the Great Casino and Lyceum All-Star Repertory Company did not think of having its trunks sent to the theatres upon which it descended.

Sitting on the floor by the low south window of Mrs. Meadows's cottage, Miss Tower drew the pins from her hair and let it fall about her shoulders. She leaned against the casement, the warm air fanned her face, bees hung above the lilacs, the little attenuated fountain tinkled in its stucco basin, and lulled by surroundings such as she had not known in years Miss Tower, still facing the homely glory of the garden, presently fell asleep. And so it was that, coming briskly home from the violin lesson which he had been giving, Arnold West, who had just vacated the front room at Mrs. Meadows's, saw her.

The window was not high, and the wistaria framed its picture charmingly. Arnold watched, spellbound. Who was she—here in Sun Prairie, and at Mrs. Meadows's? He demanded this of Mrs. Meadows breathlessly, when he met her on the stairs. Cressida Tower, the Juliet of that night's performance—the performance at which, as usual, he was to play first violin in the orchestra! He went to his room, and his hands were trembling.

"Oh," he warned himself, "but she will have the same dreadful voice that they all have! What are you hoping for?"

He hurried to put on his worn "best" clothes, and rushed from his room, expecting he hardly knew what. In the hall he met Jerry bearing the "gray trunk, with a strap." As Arnold went down the path on his way to dinner at the hotel, his violin case under his arm, he saw that the muslin curtains of his old room were drawn.

"Nonsense," he said to himself, impatiently as before, "her voice is sure to be frightful. What are you thinking of?"

"Alice West's boy," as Sun Prairie knew him, was "doing for himself" as bookkeeper in the little bank since his mother died, and giving violin lessons

to the high-school professor's daughter, and playing first violin in the orchestra. He was a delicate lad, hardly twenty, with a face fresh for all its sadness, and a mouth as sensitive as his long, fair hands. In spite of his reserve, in spite of his unconquerable aloofness, he was shyly loved by the rough, kindly people who had loved his mother, a hard-working little seamstress. Even though he was known to go to the upland and play on his violin alone at night, no one thought him really mad, for his mother's sake. Yet a young stranger schoolmaster who had been caught red-handed declaiming poetry in Dates's Grove was looked at askance until he was supplanted, to the relief of the Sun Prairie mothers. Even Mrs. Meadows, without Arnold suspecting it, lost a dollar a month on the room which he occupied, and lost it cheerfully.

"Alice West never stented me in her time," she would say. "Often she's set and sewed over-hours for me to get somethin' done. An' I ain't the one to forget it with her boy."

At Miss Tower's urgent request Mrs. Meadows consented to serve her with supper that night, so that the little actress did not leave the house until time to go to the theatre. Then great Lallie Marshall, the character man—Laurien Marchiel on the play-bills—lounged around to help her carry her costumes and make-up box.

"Mighty mean of Marley to play you that trick," said Mr. Marshall sympathetically, as he closed the gate and gathered up a dragging tassel.

"What—to make me come here?" asked Miss Tower in surprise. "Oh, Lallie! I've loved it! Look back."

Mr. Marshall glanced back at the little white cottage and its purple forest of lilacs. The moon was showing low and red in the warm dusk.

"You're a queer one, Cress," he said. "Why, the hotel's a bird. Bathroom on every floor."

Arnold West, waiting by the opera house door, saw the two arrive. He scanned Miss Tower's face breathlessly. She was a little blue, simply

clad figure, with a cheap sailor hat set on her glorious hair. But Arnold's eyes rested gratefully on the small features and unrouged cheeks. He heard her full contralto voice as she passed. There had never been a woman like her in any company that had come to Sun Prairie since he had played first violin. The others had been creatures of loud voices, high in favor with the incredible men of the troupe. But she! And her name was Cressida. Arnold's hands were trembling again as he tried the strings of his instrument. They trembled as he drew his bow over them in the thin, sweet notes of the overture. Jefferson B. Marlybone, donning the cotton velvet of the Montagues, stopped and listened.

"Gad!" he said. "Some poor devil with an ear got himself buried alive in Sun Prairie."

When the curtain arose on the palace of Verona, Arnold sat in a fever of impatience. He had read the play a hundred times—Alice West's boy had a little shelf of his mother's well-thumbed books—and he noted gratefully the immoderate cuts which the text had suffered, since they hastened the appearance of Juliet. When at last she came, in her tawdry blue frock, her abundant hair about her shoulders, and when the boy in the orchestra heard again her clear, low voice, which all her bad training could not harm, he closed his eyes in a sudden access of something like pain. For he knew her—that she was not of the race of the others, knowing too much of the world, nor yet of the Sun Prairie women, knowing nothing of the world; but a woman with wonderful hair and voice, who spoke the words, he thought, as if she loved them. Poor Arnold had no wish to judge her as Juliet; he could not have gauged her simple art if he would; he was only overwhelmingly conscious of a star within his own barren orbit at last.

Cressida saw the boy in the orchestra. He was a noticeable figure, his pale distinction flowering from the red-faced German musicians about him. The fashion in which his great eyes fol-

lowed her through the piece pleased her. Once she smiled at him, and Arnold went cold and faint, and then the blood surged to his face and he sat breathless, hungering for another look from her. The absurdity of his young self in the village orchestra going mad over a girl in a strolling company did not occur to him. For the first time in his life his delicate, detached humor forsook him, and he lived the moments as if they were the first moments of his life.

When the curtain went down and left her lying in her tinsel gown in the tomb, the boy, with streaming eyes, groped for his violin case and stumbled somehow from the theatre. It must be remembered that Arnold was barely twenty, and in his life he had never seen a beautiful woman—a woman with the beauty that has been awakened—the beauty that does not lie asleep, and dies at last as he had seen it die on the faces of the women in Sun Prairie. The boy—sensitive, high-strung, unconsciously attuned to all beauty—was profoundly moved, and he offered no resistance to the new, enthralling force that possessed him.

He hovered at the door, a little apart from the other stragglers, and watched her leave the place, Benvolio, who was Mr. Marshall again, carrying her burden. She moved up the moon-swept street, Arnold following in ecstasy to know that the same roof would shelter them. Of the morrow, when she would be gone, he dared not think. He waited until he had seen her safely admitted to the cottage and Mr. Marshall had swung away down the street. Then he went softly into the garden and stole away from the path, over the glittering grass, and threw himself in the shadow of the lilacs near the little fountain, where he could watch her window. It remained dark for several minutes. Then, to his great joy, the curtains parted and he saw her lean from the casement in the bright spring moonlight.

It had been a very long time since Cressida had looked from a window over a garden when the moon was

shining. Yet she remembered herself, a shy, thin, lonely little child in her one year at school, stealing from her bed to stand in the square of moonlight that poured through the uncurtained dormitory window, and she remembered how Sister Elizabeth had carried her to bed with a gentle reproof. The moon was made to put one to sleep, Cressida remembered that Sister Elizabeth had said. And she recalled another time, when she was taking dancing lessons, and a poor young poet, who lived on the floor above, had come into her life. Three times a week he would walk home with her from the professor's to her mother's lodging—the lodging of Mademoiselle Fadette. And on those nights sometimes the moon was already shining over the little park they crossed. She could see her young poet now, footing silently beside her, his hat carried in his hand, the moon softening his tired young face. Ah, the things that he had taught her to see—and what were they? she wondered suddenly, looking out over the feathery purple of the lilacs. But she had forgotten; how could she, poor and overworked, remember how the boy-poet had taught her to notice the night, star-lit or softly dark or moon-white, as it chanced, and to take account of its beauty as the busy and the pre-occupied take account of rain? He had taught her to live the moments that she was hurrying to her lesson and home again, thus respecting the out-of-doors as she respected the very walls of her ugly home; he had taught her to read about these things, too, and had laughed at her for confession of "skipping the descriptions" when she read, and he had taught her to say soft, musical verses that rested her when she was weary beyond belief. In the end she had regretfully to tell him that to share his little attic room and to learn more of the magic that he had to teach would be very wonderful, but that she meant to be rich and great instead.

Rich and great! Oh, the faint little fountain falling in its painted

basin—how it stood for the splendor that she had meant to have for her own!—vague splendor, in which figured fountains and terraces, and she in trailing gowns moving about among blossoms, forever young and beautiful and devotedly admired. Instead, there had been hard work, ghastly, unspeakable drudgery, and journeys without comfort, and cheap theatres and—Marley.

As she remembered these things, looking down on the white green and the dim lilacs and the shining ribbon of water, she was seized by a whimsical desire. She had acted for other people a very long time now; why should she not, this once, act for herself? There was the fair little lawn, there were the blossoming trees and falling water, refined by the night and their unfamiliarity into positive grandeur. And here—across her trunk—lay the white-and-tinsel Juliet gown; why should she not pretend, for an hour, that the world had gone her way?

Smiling, she slipped off the cheap blue frock, and in a moment stood in Juliet's long white gown, embroidered with silver lilies. She shook down her hair and bound it about with her chain of white beads, and then she went softly down the stairs and out the door which Mrs. Meadows had adjured her to leave open for Arnold. She stepped out in the full whiteness of the moon, beating down on the glittering grass, and crossed to the fountain.

Arnold, lying in the shadow of the lilacs, watched her as if she were an apparition from the world of his dream of her. She sat on the edge of the fountain's low basin, and the moon caught the white of the beads in her hair and the silver in her gown and the whiteness of her teeth as she smiled at her whim. The strangeness of her appearance there in that attire did not even occur to him. She was Juliet; why should she not be there in white and silver, with a net of pearls in her hair? Then the boy boldly left the shadow of the lilacs and stood before her, his violin in his hand.

"Please, don't be frightened," he said; "I live here, too."

"Oh," said Cressida, startled, but at once recognizing the delicate face from the orchestra, "I know! I saw your mother's picture."

Arnold's face lighted.

"Did you?" he cried. "Did Mrs. Meadows show you? I am so glad."

He moved a little away from her, hesitating.

"Sit down!" cried Cressida briskly, waving him to the edge of the fountain beside her. "Let's talk, shall we? So you are glad I saw your mother's picture. Why is that?"

In any other surroundings Arnold would have shrunk instinctively from her words, but now he hardly noted them or was conscious of her manner. Was not her voice full and low, and was she not Juliet? He threw his hat on the grass and laid his violin beside it, and sat where she bade him.

"Well," he answered, not daring to look at her, "I always like her to see anything beautiful I have seen."

Cressida stared a moment.

"Upon my word," she said, "that's pretty, now."

The boy flushed and took something from his pocket.

"I had her picture there with me tonight," he said shyly, holding it toward her. "I saw you at the window, asleep, when I came home, and I wanted her to see."

Cressida stretched out her hand for the picture in its little black frame.

"What a nice idea!" she said gently.

Arnold stole a shy, breathless glance at her. Her face still wore the red and white of its stage make-up, but the moon softened it to beauty. The hand that held the picture flashed with rings. Her hair was loosened and fell about her neck. The long straight lines of the Juliet gown, the girl's slimness, the rainbow ribbon of water flashing over her head and the white, white moon—these intoxicated him.

All the fancy and dream in his hungry little heart, so long stifled at its bookkeeping, so long outraged in

the scraping orchestra, suddenly flowered in the moment. And all the little spirits of shadow and light wind drew near him, as is their custom when there is the slightest hope of weaving themselves into dreams and spells. It was these, perhaps, that made the boy suddenly bold.

"You look beautiful," he said shyly; "like a princess. Do you mind my telling you? I couldn't help it, somehow."

Cressida stared.

"Not a bit of it," she returned cordially, and was suddenly embarrassed by the boy's clear look, and she glanced down at her gown with a laugh that was almost awkward.

"It must look right silly," she said, "these things, out here in the wet grass!"

"The whole world ought to dress like that," declared Arnold, and remembered a party at the professor's when he had sat on a balcony with the professor's daughter, who wore a high-throated, starched muslin gown. How could he have thought her beautiful?

"I came out here where it's cool," pursued Cressida, haunted by some demand for explanation.

The boy longed to have her know that he understood why she really came.

"Oh," he cried boldly, "no, you didn't! You came out here because you love the moon and the night and the—differentness!"

Cressida looked about her.

"Well," she admitted, with a laugh, "maybe. I like it, I guess, because it lets me pretend. As if I didn't have pretending enough to do on the stage!"

"No," cried Arnold earnestly, "nobody can do pretending enough. It's the nicest thing in the world."

"When you're hungry?" asked the actress sharply.

"When you're lonely," said the boy simply. "I do it all the time. I'm doing it now."

"You are. Well, what are you pretending I am?" asked Cressida dubiously.

"Why, you are just you, of course,"

returned Arnold seriously, "but I am pretending I'm a great musician, with the world at my feet, and I've brought it to you—out here in the garden. And I've come to play to you besides," he finished, surprised at his own courage.

"What a nice idea!" she said again. "And you're going to take me away on a yacht, with a lot of jolly people, aren't you? Well, play for me then—really, play for me. Let's wake the old town up."

Arnold took up his case readily.

"I can play softly," he said; "I often do, out here. No one seems to be disturbed."

He stood up by the lilacs, the moon on his face, and played to her softly, softly, as one who plays and listens in dreams.

Cressida listened. It immensely pleased her instinct for the dramatic. When the boy began she glanced quickly about, with a little breath of content, and reflected that this was quite the nicest thing that had happened to her since Marley had taken her to the carnival ball and she had worn her Magda gown.

The notes of the violin were threaded on the thin under-harmony of the falling water and the light wind. The music was not the voice of the night. It was rather the voice of some heart, stronger than the night, and at such piercingly beautiful speech the night was quiet, hushing its own manifold little voices.

Gradually the girl forgot the mere novelty of the hour and became absorbed in its beauty. What did all this remind her of? she wondered. Nothing beautiful and lost, for she had had nothing beautiful in her life; unless— For the second time that night her mind went back to the young poet whom she had known. In some strange way the night and the violin reminded her of him. She wondered vaguely if he, too, had played the violin; but he had not, she remembered, and it was not that he looked like Arnold, either; yet the thought of him and his words persistently stirred

in her heart. What was it that he used to tell her? If she could only remember! There had been something about a land a great way off—something about a land a great way off. And there were things which he used to tell her were dearer than the splendor that she longed for—love, of course, for one thing; people always said that, she reflected; and books—perhaps it was books; only so much of all books was stupid! And as for music—but she could not sit always and listen to music. What could it have been? Something about a land a great way off!

The playing ceased, and Arnold came back to the fountain, breathing quickly. He threw himself down and looked up into her face. Perhaps he knew, she thought suddenly, what it was that the poor young poet used to tell her about. She bent toward him eagerly.

"There is something," she said uncertainly, "that I think of and want when you play, and I think I have been told what it is, but I can't remember. It's nothing about being good—that is tiresome, and this that I mean is beautiful. It's—it's like something you've dreamed about, and remember when you first wake up, and then forget. Do you know what I mean?"

"Yes," cried Arnold radiantly; "I know! I know!"

"Tell me," she cried breathlessly, and he hardly knew that he took both her hands as he sat looking up in her wonderful eyes.

"You mean," cried Arnold, "the sort of life that two people know about who care more for this sort of thing—this hour that we are having now, than for anything in the world, and who have this same joy in their hearts, no matter how hard they work, or how tired they get, or what stupid people they have to be with. It's *being* all the time just what you are when the moon is this way, and the lilacs smell like this. Oh, I knew that you knew! Tell me that you do know!"

Cressida's forehead moved in a little

frown; her eyes were wide and earnest, but her look was undeniably puzzled. She shook her head and groped out with one hand.

"It's all in the air," she said; "I can't touch it, somehow. I think I know now. But tomorrow—tomorrow when we catch the seven-ten for Barlo's Centre, and the trunks don't get down in time, and Marley's cross—what then?"

"There'll be this to remember," cried the boy triumphantly, "and to keep on having."

"That was the way I tried to keep the carnival ball in my head," said Cressida thoughtfully. "When I was tired next day I tried to remember the lights, and the champagne, and the way the men flattered, and how I danced on the—"

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what the music had said? Just for a moment the spell lay upon her; then she remembered. To break her contract with Marley would serve him right—that almost tempted her; but to break her contract that she might stay in Sun Prairie—in Sun Prairie! And yet, why not? Here was peace, and here was the house with the lilacs where she had longed to stay, and here was this eager, beautiful boy, and his love—and here was the spell of that other unknown thing, the spell of the land that is a great way off. Why not? She crushed his hands together fiercely, and something hard lay beneath them. It was his mother's picture—the picture of Alice West, whose boy was placing himself in her keeping.

"You!" she cried to him suddenly, "what of you? I've never thought of anybody but myself in my life. What of you?"

Arnold smiled—the confident, pitiful smile of young hope.

"I!" he cried magnificently, "I love you!"

But the woman knew; though whether it was that she grew sentimental in the spell of the moon, or that the old life called her, or that the black-framed picture of Alice West rebuked her, she never knew. But she rose with a little indulgent laugh.

"Come," she said, "I'm cold, and I have an early start tomorrow. You are delightful—but it's late."

Arnold struggled to his feet.

"What do you mean?" he cried, his face quite white.

She spoke to him with sudden gentleness.

"See," she said, "I have a long contract to fill. It would be dishonorable to break that—wouldn't it, now?"

"Yes," said Arnold, quietly enough.

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Cressida went out past the fountain and the lilacs to the village street, which was early astir for the sake of its departing delegates. A few steps from Mrs. Meadows's gate she came back and gathered a plume of lilac from the bush that overhung the fence. She drew in its deep breath.

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"Willing enough," replied Cressida indifferently.

"Call bygones done-withs?" he insisted facetiously.

"All right," said Cressida.

"Well, then, that's better," said the manager comfortably. "I ain't the one to bear a grudge, and you've had your side. What's the matter—little tired? Well, we'll have to have a quiet little dinner tonight—eh?"

"All right," said Cressida again.

"Give us a flower to bind the bargain?" he added, laying thumb and forefinger on the plume of lilac on her coat.

"No!" cried Cressida passionately.

ANTONY

ABOVE old Egypt shadowy,
As though from Cleopatra's lips,
There floats a whisper—"Antony."

By Nilus stands the date-palm tree;
O'er level plains the slow sun dips
Above old Egypt shadowy.

A sound of Bacchic revelry;
And past the shades of Time's eclipse,
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The Sphinx looks on a sandy sea;
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ERNEST MCGAFFEY.

frown; her eyes were wide and earnest, but her look was undeniably puzzled. She shook her head and groped out with one hand.

"It's all in the air," she said; "I can't touch it, somehow. I think I know now. But tomorrow—tomorrow when we catch the seven-ten for Barlo's Centre, and the trunks don't get down in time, and Marley's cross—what then?"

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ERNEST MCGAFFEY.

THE SEARCH

WHERE great souls sat with wisdom rife
She questioned wistfully,
"Where shall I find that joy of life
That once was part of me?"

"That put the singing on my lips,
The dancing in my feet,
The kisses on my finger-tips
To throw to all things sweet?"

"I know not when it went away—
No word it gave nor sign;
I only know 'twas mine one day,
And now no more is mine."

They smiled above her discontent,
The wondrous souls and wise;
"Find us the path the first spring went
When winter gloomed the skies.

"Find us the way the dead dreams go,
The road Love journeys on
What time he turns before we know
Or guess that he is gone.

"And when you find these paths in truth,
These divers ways and crossed,
Then shall you find the road to Youth
Whereon your joy is lost."

Oh, many, many paths there be;
Think you she found that one
Whereon her joy of life strays free
And singing in the sun?

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



TRUE

COBBLE—Do you think the time will ever come when we will forget how to walk?

STONE—Well, I don't know. We are perfectly safe as long as we have automobiles.

HERALDIC HUMORS AND ERRORS

By F. J. Knight Adkin

MANY an epitaph has been written on the death of "Chivalrie," scarce one to chronicle the decease of the science of Heraldry, which lent so much romance to the days of joust and tourney. The young man who, five centuries ago, would have stood disgraced as an uneducated boor for confounding the terms "pallet" and "pellet," if reincarnated today might, without rebuke, describe a "talbot rampant azure" as a "blue dog on its hind legs."

The herald, whose person, college and art were once almost superstitiously revered as objects which it was sacrilege to abuse and iconoclasm to maltreat, now often becomes a tool in the vainglorious hand of those who, wishing to decorate their carriage doors appropriately, forget the advice inscribed in 1662 on George Walton's tomb at Little Burstead, Essex:

Plain coates are noblest; though ye vulgar
eye,
Take Joseph's for the best in Herauldry.

In this matter, however, "a little learning is a dangerous thing," as may be instanced in the case of a certain parvenu in England. Happening to have the same name as a well-known and noble family, he paid his fees to the Herald's College, and requested a grant of the same arms; the College naturally insisted on making a slight change, "for difference." He accepted their decision and forthwith proudly flaunted, over his gateway and on his plate, the famous coat of arms, crossed by the "scarpe sinister"—a mark of illegitimacy!

While on this subject it may be well to correct a very popular and widespread error; namely, that the "bar sinister" is a mark of illegitimate descent. In the first place, to speak of a "bar" as being from the right or left is absurd, since it runs to and from both sides of the shield; again, the "bend sinister" is a perfectly honorable charge, though often mistaken for the "scarpe" which is half, or the "baton," which is one-quarter, of its width, and does not touch the sides of the shield; as both of the latter imply a stain on the family honor.

It is not generally known that, although those who have acquired arms by "assumption" are very justly ridiculed, technically they are quite within their rights, on the authority of that cornerstone of the science, "The Boke of St. Albans"; provided the arms are heraldically correct and not exact copies of any existing coat.

In cases of this kind, however, the enterprising "armiger" usually oversteps his rights, by adopting an ancestor who "came over with William the Conqueror." Why he should thus modestly stop at the eleventh century it is difficult to see, when many of the old Welsh genealogists inserted a note in the middle of their table to the effect that "about this time Adam was made."

Indeed, Dame Juliana Berners goes further and describes Adam's coat-armor as "a shield gules, upon which the arms of Eve, a shield argent, were quartered, as an escutcheon of pretense, she being an heiress."

The good dame does not take upon herself to explain the why and where-

fore of her last remark, but goes on to tell how as a punishment, after the fall, Adam is compelled to bear the ignominious shield "*paly tranche*, divided in every way and tinctured of every color"; a much more difficult design, be it noticed, for Eve to embroider on a fig-leaf garment.

Without a touch of profanity, Nicholas Ferne, too, ascribes crests and arms to most of the Biblical characters. Among others, he mentions that "the apostles were also gentlemen of blood."

Whether this fact materially assisted their position after death is a matter of conjecture; for, on the authority of Dionysius, the Areopagite, first bishop of Athens, it is stated that social distinctions exist in heaven much as they do on earth, the angels being classed as Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels or Angels. Imagine the chagrin of a royal duke on finding himself created a mere "Archangel," while his butler takes precedence of him with the full distinctions of a "Power"! It would be well, however, to think twice before accepting this theory as a belief; in fact, Casaubon, with the candid directness which has been the hallmark of the critic for all time, denounces those who are sufficiently credulous to do so, as "asses."

Heywood, however, in 1635, taking the risk of this undignified appellation, published a kind of celestial "Burke" called "The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angells," in which he enumerates their names, orders and offices. The great Calvin dismisses this work as "*mera garrulitas*" (nonsensical chatter); while Nares sarcastically suggests that the author went to heaven and then returned, in order that the world in general might benefit by his experiences.

In spite of all these fantastic conceits, it is certain that a rude style of heraldry did exist in very early times. The arms of the Grecian emperors are described on trustworthy evidence as "a cross between four bouncing B's." (How these alphabetical gymnastics

were performed is left entirely to the imagination.) These letters were supposed to be the initials of Greek words meaning, "King of Kings, reigning over Kings." Selden argues the impossibility of such extreme majesty; "though German civilians would fain have it otherwise," was the pertinent remark of Archdeacon Nares a century ago; he also implies an "odious comparison" when he adds that ancient emperors liked to style themselves gods. It is of interest to notice how little change a hundred years makes in the characteristics of a nation.

The fanciful devices by which men and families were distinguished are not confined by any means to the civilized races of the earth; the potentates and head men of nearly all savage races claim kinship with some bird or animal, frequently tracing their device on pottery, dwellings and clothing or even on their own bodies. Their war cries also have a parallel in our mottoes, many of which originated from the same source; this accounts in some instances for a seemingly senseless sentence, such as the Dakinises' of Derbyshire, "Strike Dakyns, the Devil's in the Hemp."

The point is a little more evident in the motto of that ancient and cross-legged fraternity, the Merchant Tailors, "*Sit merita laus*." The "merry tailors," however, refused either to "sit" or stand such levity, and had it altered to its present form. This they had every right to do, though many people believe the motto to be as difficult to alter as the crest or coat of arms.

But while everyone has a right to assume whatever word or sentence he likes, it is advisable to use some discretion, lest one fall into the same plight as a certain funeral outfitter who had a coat of arms made to order when he attained to the dignity of alderman. As a finishing touch, some wag added for a motto the word "*Suscipio*" (I undertake), which formed an unconscious advertisement of the owner's profession on his private notepaper.

This is hardly a surprising mistake

when one remembers the general disregard exhibited toward the science. How few Americans, born and bred, would recognize the description, "A shield argent, charged with six pallets gules; on a chief azure, thirty-eight stars of the first," as the emblem of the United States, one of the most simple and beautiful of all emblems.

Simplicity, nevertheless, is not a leading feature in all American arms. For instance, the only possible way to blazon the arms of Kansas would be as follows: "Two ox-teams and wagons between a man plowing in sinister foreground, and Indians hunting buffalo in dexter middle distance; on sinister a double-funneled and hurricane-decked steamer; behind mountains in distance, sun rising; on sky in half-circle, thirty-seven stars; all proper. Motto, *Ad astra per aspera*."

Speaking of heraldry in America, Mr. Cussans calls attention to a fact which may be verified seven days in the week by a walk along Fifth avenue; how among the passing carriages he noticed many which bore arms to which the owners had no right, while an equal number bore monograms where a crest or coat of arms might justly have been blazoned. He goes on to quote an anecdote told by Mr. Crampton, who was once British Minister at Washington. It seems that he imported a brougham from England, and on visiting a carriage-builder some time later found a miscellaneous collection of vehicles ornamented with his own arms. On making inquiries he learned that several citizens who "liked the pattern" had had it copied.

These mishaps will continue to occur until some kind of a college is formed to manage the heraldic system of the United States, which is as genuine and complete as that of any European nation.

Being free from the trammels of a peerage, however, such a body would not have to authorize rules for conversation with noble persons, such as are set down in the two hundred and fourth number of *The Tatler*, which

affirms that the title "his lordship" must be used only for dignified purposes. For instance, though one may speak of "his lordship's favor or judgment," it would be an error of taste to mention "his lordship's thumb, wig, cane or great toe."

Many people place a blind trust in their stationer or monumental mason to turn out their armorial bearings correctly. The result is sometimes extraordinary, not to say extra-natural. One statuary, who was required to design a tomb, copied the arms from a tablet erected to the memory of the grandfather of the deceased; the latter thus went down to posterity as a bachelor, aged ten years, married to his own grandmother, which lady had departed to a better land some forty years before his birth.

It is some satisfaction to remember that genealogical forgeries are not confined to modern days. Some centuries ago they took place on a far larger scale. In the twelfth century an imposition was attempted which, though it may be condemned on the ground of its colossal impudence, is entitled to a certain respect by reason of the overwhelming patriotism displayed in its inception.

It happened as follows: One Geoffrey of Monmouth, an English friar, being a learned man, had taken a deep interest in Greek and Roman histories, and became exceedingly jealous of their grand records, stretching back into the vagueness of primeval days. He determined that England should have some ancient history even if he wore out his last quill to procure it. Forthwith he sat down and concocted the story of one Brutus, a grandson of Æneas of Troy, who in the course of his travels discovered, colonized and gave his name to Britain.

The ingenious man was destined, however, to disappointment. Nubriensis, Polydore Virgil and Camden, sordid realists with no imagination, callously rejected the work. It was a case of mistaken vocation. As a historian Geoffrey was a failure, even in the twelfth century; today he might

make his fortune on the staff of an evening paper.

Several of the more ancient nations of the earth filched "a past" and ignored criticism. The Egyptians appropriate a period of some fifty thousand years, and pretend to have noted twelve hundred eclipses before the reign of Alexander the Great.

The Chaldeans unblushingly state that they made astronomical observations during four hundred thousand years. The Chinese modestly claim to have done the same for merely forty thousand years, though this takes them back many centuries before the creation, as established by Moses.

The Arcadians openly boasted that they were more ancient than the moon; while Sicilians make the date of the foundation of Palermo contemporary with the patriarch Isaac.

All this may wander a little from the subject, but where history begins heraldry begins also; besides, what is said of nations may equally well be applied to families.

Mr. Fox-Davies, the most exact and exclusive of modern heralds, says:

"... Though it is a brutal admission to have to make, I cannot believe, and do not believe for one moment, any man's account of his own family or take his word concerning them. No matter how truthful a man may be, his probity never seems to have stability on that one point."

Of the thousands of titled and untitled families who claim descent from followers of William the Conqueror, etc., only three hundred and thirty can prove their claim back to Henry VII!

"Hungry time hath made a glutton's meal on this catalogue of gentry" (the list of gentry of Henry VI's time), "and hath left but a very little morsel for manners remaining," says Fuller in his book, "Worthies of Bedfordshire."

On one subject at least the ancient

heralds cannot be taken as authorities—that of natural history; one has been taught, for instance, to deny the existence of the griffin they so often portray, though Sir John Mandeville vouches for it in the twenty-sixth chapter of his "Ryght Merveylous Travels," saying that in Bacharie there are "more plentee" than anywhere else, having "the body upward as an egle, and benethe as a lyoun"; they are, however, stronger than a combination of one hundred eagles and eight lions, frequently carrying off two yoked oxen to their nests; of their feathers "men maken bowes full stronge to schote with arrowes."

They also blazon the homocane (half child, half spaniel), the falcon fish with a hound's ear and "the wonderfull pig of the ocean"—all vouched for, no doubt, by travelers who had seen them.

Nor do they distinguish themselves in the role of prophets; after a small victory in the War of Independence an English officer was granted on his crest "a broken flagstaff bearing the American standard reversed." It is surprising that this has not since been differenced as "the American standard on a flagstaff very durably repaired."

The question of authorizing arms in the United States has been brought before Congress, but by some oversight the words of Noah were never quoted, which would have at once persuaded the House that no country has so ancient a right to use these once much esteemed appurtenances of a gentleman. For after leaving the ark, writes Dame Juliana, he said to Ham: "Wycked kaytiff, as a churle thou shalt live in the thirde parte of the worlde wiche shall be calde Europe, that is to say, the contre of churles." But to Japheth he says: "Cum heder, my sonne, thou shalt have my blessing, dere; I make thee a gentelman of the West part of the worlde, that is to say, the contre of gentilmen."

